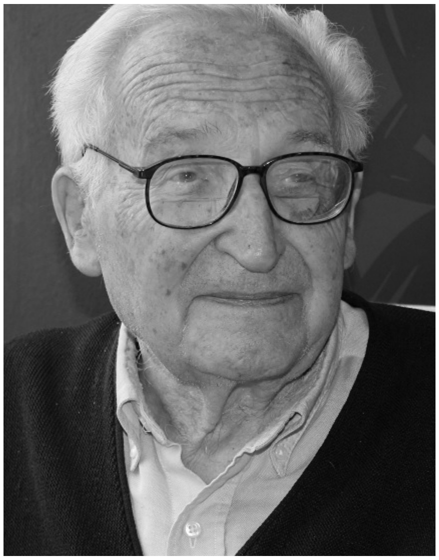


BELARUSIAN REVIEW

FALL 2014
Volume 26, No. 3

In this issue

FOREWORD



IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE STANKEVICH

(March 18, 1928 - August 7, 2014)

editor-in-chief/publisher

BELARUSIAN REVIEW

It is with great sadness, but also with great admiration that we say good-bye to George Stankevich, long-time editor of the Belarusian Review journal. George Stankevich, or Jurka, as we all called him, had a special place in the hearts of the members of the Belarusian community in the Czech Republic.

Jurka, born in Vilnia, was the oldest of three sons of Jan Stankevich, a professor of Belarusian philology and history and Marie Novakova, a librarian. Jan Stankevich's dedication to Belarus' independence forced him and his family to resettle during World War II in Prague, then move to post-war US occupied Germany and finally to the United States, where Jurka went to college, served in the U.S. Army and worked most of his adult life.

When Jurka retired in 1993, he relocated from California, USA to the Czech Republic at his wife Hana's request to return to her homeland. Jurka quickly felt at home in Prague. Among his Czech relatives from his mother's side and amid the growing Belarusian community in the Czech Republic, Jurka felt welcome and loved. He continued his involvement in various Belarus-related projects and initiatives.

A special place among these initiatives belonged to the "Belarusian Review," the oldest continuously published English-language journal fully devoted to Belarus: to its current political and economic situation, the culture and history, as well as to the activities of the Belarusian diaspora. For many years he was the editor-in-chief of our journal, starting every morning monitoring the news, selecting the most interesting and important ones. These were stored in special folders of his computer and used in the layout of the upcoming journal issues. He also published "Kryvija", the only Belarusian language newsletter in the Czech Republic, focusing on the major events of the Belarusian community.

Jurka always spoke from the heart and was open to anyone he met in his life, be it ethnic Belarusians or other nationals. He enjoyed learning new languages and traditions. He loved to travel, and always managed to find nature that resembled his deeply beloved Belarus. Until he his last years, he was always ready to go on a trip that his family or friends invited him to.

In 2013 as a birthday present he received plane tickets to Vilnia, a city of his birth. Although, it was already hard for him to walk a lot, he gladly accepted it. While visiting the places that were dear to his heart and that brought memories of his childhood, in this, modern and foreign Vilnius he saw the city of his youth.

Jurka also liked to recall his visits to Prague, not only during his early school years, but also his later visit in 1968, when as an American citizen, he risked to stay in the Czechoslovak capital, in order to witness the exciting changes of the short-lived „Prague Spring". Although he was alerted by the American Embassy that it might be unsafe for him to stay in Prague, he could not resist not witnessing the historical events with his own eyes.

Although Jurka worked as a hardware and electrical engineer, he nonetheless devoted a lot of his time to teaching the children of Belarusian emigrants the Belarusian language and history, both in the United States and later in Prague. He was even ready to travel to the homes of those small ones, whose parents wanted to preserve and pass Belarusianness to the younger generation.

Jurka worked on spreading the usage of Belarusian language as a teacher, as a community leader, or as a publisher of Belarusian textbooks on language and history. He compiled and distributed, the only at that time, Belarusian conversational dictionary for English speakers. He never took money for his work, attempting to make everything that he developed and distributed, open-sourced and widely used. This is how he will be remembered and kept in our hearts – a generous, friendly, open and selflessly devoted person, whose heart was always with Belarus, regardless of where he lived or travelled to.

Jurka Stankevich passed away on August 7, 2014 in Prague. He is survived by his two younger brothers, Walter (Viačka) and Bill (Bahuš), their wives, five nephews and their families, his two grandsons, Kobi and Miles, and daughter, Jana Branisa, as well as a large international Belarusian community. Funeral services were held in Prague at the Church of the Saviour, on August 15, 2014. He was buried with his wife, Hana, in the family crypt in Kladno, Czech Rebublic. An international community of family, friends and supporters attended the services.

This issue of „Belarusian Review" is the last one which we prepared together with Jurka. He was involved in the planning and editing of its contents. Always optimistic and full of ideas, he never gave up. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for his dedication to develop and maintain the „Belarusian Review". We will continue his efforts so that the Belarusian voice will be heard in the English language media.

EDITORIAL

A WORD OF APPRECIATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

JAN ZAPRUDNIK

In memory of my dear friends,
Joseph Arciuch and George Stankevich,
founders and long-time editors of the
Belarusian Review.

For a better understanding of the East-European political landscape, especially now in relation with Russia's aggressive foray into Ukraine, one has to take a closer look at Ukraine's northern neighbor, Belarus, a nation of nine-and-a-half million people with a strategic location on the line between Berlin and Moscow.

The English-language informational sources on Belarus, if not abundant in paper- book form, have been richly accumulating in the cyberspace over the last years. Belarusian Review stands out among them not only as a well-established (since 1989) paper-based publication (now also electronic – in cooperation with The Point Journal (thepointjournal.com), but also as a solid source of analytical interpretation of Belarus by such authoritative scholars and researchers as David Marples, Curt Woolhiser, Zina Gimpelevich, Paul Goble, Leonid Smilovitsky, Valery Kavaleuski, Kiryl Kascian, Hanna Vasilevich, Andrzej Tichomirow, and many others. Their discerning analyses are essential for understanding Belarus, which lately found itself as one of the mediators in the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation. It would be interesting to watch President Lukashenka's role in this diplomatic haggling, for his attitude toward the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has been on occasions quite ambivalent. And that's understandable. As the head of a newly (1991) re-established state, he must be acutely aware of the renewed Russian existential threat to Belarus. And nobody but Lukashenka himself added immensely to this threat by his pro-Russian policies, among which the most damaging to the sense of Belarusian national identity has been linguistic Russianization of Belarus. This damage became painfully acute now in the light of the current Moscow's aggression toward Ukraine, based on a pretext of defending allegedly violated Russian-speakers' rights in that sovereign state..

In the case of Belarus, Russian threat to its current political status is potentially even more ominous. The problem is that Belarus, unlike Ukraine (whose western part had been outside Russian domain, under Austria, in 1795-1917), had undergone deep Russianization, linguistic and religious, in its entire territory during the same period. The Belarusian language, banned from the official use and eventually prohibited in print, survived almost exclusively in rural areas. And when toward the end of the nineteenth century the Belarusian national rebirth movement gained traction, language became the defining element of the nationality concept and nation building process. Suppression of the full-fledged role of Belarusian language has become the basic tool of Russian full or partial control of Belarus. Curt Woolhiser thoroughly described the pervasive usage of Russian in daily life in Belarus today in two latest issues of Belarusian Review (v. 26, #1 and #2, Spring and Summer, 2014).

The potentially political danger of Russianization is well understood both by many Belarusian statesmen and cultural activists as well as their allies in the West. An eloquent example of such an understanding on the Belarusian side occurred last June in Minsk, Belarus, at a ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of the Belarusian Language Society whose president and former MP, Aleh Trusau, said:

> *"The language question is unusually important today. It serves as a basis for political decisions. On the one side, interest of society in the Belarusian language is growing today. However, violations of language rights in Belarus, nihilistic attitudes toward national language on a part of the population, as well as discrimination of the Belarusian language, are preparing ground for replication in our land of the Crimean or East-Ukrainian scenario."*

Trusau urged his audience to raise the level of national culture and identity, to unite efforts in securing the Belarusian language the status of "real state language", which are "basic factors" in preserving the sovereignty of Belarus. Such awareness is seemingly affecting the state bureaucracy. President Lukashenka himself, Russianizer as he has been, addressing the nation on Belarus's Independence Day (July the 3rd), and speaking in Belarusian for the first time on such occasion, admitted that to be a nation people have to know their own language.

That much has been understood by the US Government and many private Western supporters of Belarus's statehood since its very renewal in 1991. A significant role in the spread of such an understanding, we can proudly say, was played by the Belarusian Review, which devoted many a page explaining to Western readers the essential role of culture and national language in building up an independent democratic Belarusian State.

Appreciating today the journal's input into the cause of Belarus's freedom from Russian imperialism, we should also be grateful for the immense role in this task played by such Western outfits as Radio Liberty, George Soros Foundation, Belsat, Radio Racja, a number of Internet sites and NGOs, the European Humanities University, numerous internships, scholarships and many other programs.

And, self-evidently, let us support the continuous existence of the Belarusian Review, launched 25 years ago and worked on devotedly today by a young cohort of editors and an array of qualified contributors.

RESOLUTION BY THE RADA OF THE BELARUSIAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC REGARDING RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE AND THE POSITION OF BELARUS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

The Rada of the Belarusian Democratic Republic (Rada BNR),

• Concerned about armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its consequences for Belarus and the region,

• Pointing to the international legal definition of an aggression according to the Resolution of the UN General Assembly No 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974,

• With reference to Article 51 of the UN Charter on the right of UN member states to individual or collective self-defense against an armed attack, as well as to Article 42 of the UN Charter on the actions of the international community by means of air, sea and land forces to protect international peace and security from an aggressor,

• Concluding that the actions of the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin directly threaten the peace in Europe and, for the first time after the collapse of the Soviet Union, create the danger of a full-scale war the region,

• Stating the vulnerability of the armistice introduced by the agreement of September 5, basing on earlier precedents of violations or non-fulfilment of obligations within peace agreements by the Russian Federation and irregular armed groups under its control, including the agreements introducing peace in Georgia in 2008,

• Referring to the statement of Rada BNR "On the dangers of armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine" of March 3, 2014,

• Remembering the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War this year:

(A) Strongly condemns the armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine;

(B) States that the current actions of the Russian Federation, as well as the previous annexation of Crimea, are criminal in nature and violate the basic principles of international law, the principles of international security developed after Second World War as well as the international obligations of the Russian Federation under the UN Charter and other bilateral and multilateral international agreements;

(C) Calls upon the international community to provide all possible support to Ukraine's defense from external aggression, considering the current situation as the most serious challenge to the security mechanisms on the European continent and to the entire modern system of security in international relations, as well as to mechanisms ensuring the life of the peoples of Europe in peace and harmony, since the Second World War;

(D) Calls upon the parties in the conflict in eastern Ukraine to transfer the conflict to a peaceful political dimension, and calls upon the international community to facilitate such transfer, primarily by influencing the leadership of the Russian Federation;

(E) Warns the officials of the Republic of Belarus about the responsibility for a possible involvement of Belarus in the war and any support of armed aggression. Belarus' participation in the aggressive international initiatives of the Russian government, or a direct or indirect assistance to them, are completely unacceptable, especially in view of the heavy losses that Belarus has suffered as a result of wars over the past centuries. In particular, it is unacceptable to involve Belarus in the war in any form with the usage of the obligations assumed on behalf of Belarus by the state leadership of Alaksandr Łukašenka within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty or any other treaties entered into by the specified state leadership on behalf of Belarus with the Russian Federationl;

(F) Calls upon the international community, despite the attempts of the regime of Aliaksandr Lukašenka to benefit from the current international situation in terms of its political and economic dominance over Belarus, to adhere to a consistent and firm position regarding this non-democratic and repressive regime. Rada BNR emphasizes that a comprehensive normalization of relations between the current leadership of the Republic of Belarus and the international community is only admissible after the release and rehabilitation of political prisoners in Belarus, the implementation of democratic elections in Belarus and subject to the citizens of the Republic of Belarus being guaranteed their basic democratic freedoms

(G) Expresses its solidarity and support to the people, government and military leadership of Ukraine, which is experiencing one of the most dramatic and critical moments in its recent history. The future of Belarus and the region depends on whether Ukraine withstands the challenges it faces now;

(H) Welcomes and considers any support that Belarusians in Belarus and around the world would give to the Ukrainian people and the state in the protection of Ukraine's sovereignty against external aggression, as well as a support to third parties who act to uphold these purposes, as appropriate to the long-term interests of the national security of Belarus.

FEATURES

BELARUS AND THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

DAVID MARPLES

As Belarus prepares for another presidential election in 2015, one can forgive some leaders of the opposition for adopting a cynical attitude toward the event. Let us recall some facts.

The last two elections (March 2006 and December 2010) ended in violence. In 2006 protests followed, along with the establishment of a tent city on October Square in bitterly cold temperatures. After several days the militia dispersed it violently, thus ending Belarus' abortive efforts to emulate the Orange Revolution in Kyiv. One of the opposition candidates, Aliaksandr Kazulin was later detained and imprisoned for attempting to release arrested activists. The other major candidate, and the one chosen by the United Democratic forces, Aliaksandr Milinkevich, had also been detained briefly during his campaign, as were both of his campaign managers.

In 2010, the post-election violence superseded that of 2006. At one point seven of the nine opposition candidates had been jailed, while another, under duress, had hastily made peace with the authorities. The militia this time initially faced a massive crowd in October Square, which proceeded to march down the main street of Minsk to Independence Square, denouncing what it perceived as a fabricated vote count. At some point several people, widely believed to be provocateurs, smashed the windows of the parliamentary building, a move that appeared to be the signal for the riot police to advance on the demonstrators. The violence of that day has since been depicted in documentaries and films. Two candidates were hospitalized, one before he had even reached October Square. Others had been arrested the day before the election. Everything appeared carefully planned and orchestrated by the regime, which had advance notice of the protest.

The aftermath of the 2010 election saw several more months of state repressions, and the KGB tortured former candidates such as Ales Mikhalevich, Andrei Sannikau, and Mikola Statkevich—a political prisoner who remains in a penal colony almost four years later (his term ends in May 2017 if it is served in full). The authorities threatened to send Sannikau's son to an orphanage since both he and his wife Iryna Khalip were detained at the same time. Youth groups and leaders were targeted. In the summer of 2011, young people were arrested for clapping in public, an indication of the regime's paranoia. The onslaught eased eventually, by which time those politicians who ran against President Aliaksandr Lukashenka had moved abroad or else were under house arrest and closely monitored by the KGB.

Today the political situation in Belarus' neighborhood has changed as a result of Russia's war with Ukraine. For Belarus, a locale for two Russian military bases and a close partner in the Zapad series of exercises with Russia, it has raised questions about loyalty and commitment to Russian-led structures, such as the Customs Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). In certain ways it has opened up opportunities for the Lukashenka leadership: to emphasize the republic's relative peacefulness by comparison, its economic stability compared to that of Ukraine, and its alleged independent role between Europe and Russia, offering—it would seem—opportunities for both the EU and the Kremlin to come courting the Belarusian president. On the other hand, as a BISS analysis points out: "The post-Soviet leaders will be a lot more cautious when choosing the European development path, as it could eventually threaten the independence and territorial integrity of their states resulting from potential aggressive responses by Russia" .

Lukashenka has even suggested that if Russian troops did come to Belarus they would have doubts over which side to support (Belarusian Television, April 22, 2014). The popularity of Lukashenka has thus not dwindled during a time of crisis involving its Slavic cousins: quite the contrary; he appears more firmly in power than he was in 2006 or 2010. His electoral rating hovered close to the 40% mark in April.

Moreover, after three earlier trials (the elections of 2001, 2006, and 2010), the Belarusian Central Election Commission runs like a well-oiled machine. Presided over by the formidable Lidziya Yarmoshyna, chair of the Commission since 1996 and a member since 1992. every step is predictable and unavoidable, from the gathering of signatures, brief ventures of candidates into state media, and the president's magisterial dismissal of proceedings, along with his holding of a state--paid assembly to decide his future plans. In 2015, the election slogan could conceivably be along the lines of "Yes, times are difficult, perhaps we may even need to devalue our currency again, but look at Ukraine, and how much worse things could be!"

Under these circumstances, it will take a brave or foolhardy politician to run against the president, who last modified the constitution ten years ago to ensure that he can continue to run indefinitely. His sixtieth birthday is approaching (August 31), and he has governed Belarus since he was 39—he is the second longest-serving non-royal leader in Europe after Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev. An entire generation has grown up knowing no one else as its leader. His face is as familiar as that of sporting heroes or box-office stars, his security services are omnipotent, and real and potential opponents have long since been vanquished. Many young people and students, always unpredictable from the regime's perspective, have chosen to pursue careers or studies abroad. Cities like Warsaw, Vilnius, and Prague are hosts to a new Belarusian Diaspora.

Incidentally the only European politicians more popular in their own country than Lukashenka in Belarus are Vladimir Putin in Russia and (based on less reliable polls) Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan. Opposition leaders' support is in single digits, with Uladzimir Niakliajeu, leader of the *Speak the Truth* movement and a former secretary of the Writers' Union, leading the pack. Very little, it seems, could go wrong for the president in 2015. On the other hand, the examples of Viktor Yanukovych in Ukraine, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya demonstrate that dictators and highly authoritarian leaders can be toppled with remarkable suddenness.

Potential candidates in Belarus might also contemplate the following:

-The electorate is unlikely to support "familiar" candidates, largely discredited by the state media;

-It is more likely to favor candidates who spend more time inside than outside of the republic and are well known in towns and villages;

-It is likely to be confused if there are numerous candidates, especially if they are unfamiliar with the business of government;

-It is unlikely to be convinced by candidates who are portrayed as pro-western, pro-NATO, or strongly pro- or anti-Russian;

-It is unlikely to be swayed by those who suggest developing closer ties or integration with the Russian Federation;

-It is likely to be interested in ideas to improve economic performance, reduce state debts and inflation, and avoid default, and to ensure higher living standards;

-Most voters live in small towns and/or the city of Minsk and their biggest concern is job security, regular wages, health care, and future pensions;

-The use of social networks and Internet sites has become essential to election candidates throughout Europe; on the other hand, there is an increasing lack of confidence and faith in state media.

Voters are also concerned about 'privatization', which in reality consists of the sale of profitable or once-profitable state companies to Russian enterprises. The business is conducted sometimes in the form of 'amalgamation' or 'joint enterprises', but in almost all cases, the reality is that the dominant factory is Russian-owned and not infrequently a government-run firm. Voters are not interested in political parties and their programs, which have lacked credence since the early 1990s and are perceived to be offering nothing new.

Taking the above into consideration, it is postulated that the situation for a new candidate is grim but not entirely devoid of optimism. Even long-term devotees of the president recognize the need for reform and modernization. The Belarusian economy is like a mortgage on a house that remains at year one after two decades in terms of the amount paid off. The interest on that debt continues to rise and the house owner seeks only to ensure that it can be met, with no possibility of actually owning the house. As Grigory Ioffe has noted in a recent article, the Belarusian government will have to pay $5 billion between July 1, 2014 and July 1, 2015 merely to service its debts.

In addition, the IMF anticipates a slowdown in the growth of GDP and inflation, no longer at the runaway levels of a year ago, will nevertheless be around 16% this year. None of the election period People's Assemblies has ever put together a credible economic plan—one reason perhaps why the government expressed some interest in the electoral program of Jaraslau Ramanchuk in 2010. Those leaders who have attempted such plans, such as the former Prime Minister Siarhei Sidorski, do no stay in office long enough to implement them or else are not allowed to do so.

The president's long tenure has been notable for its remarkable absence of a vision or program. Only after January 1, 2007, when Russian gas prices doubled, was the need for such a program even acknowledged, though little was done to introduce one for about a year (see, for example, Serhei Nikoliuk, "The Watershed Year: From Hopes to Reality," Belarus. Reality. Getting to the Heart of the Matter, Issue No. 9, October 2013, p. 12). In general economic crises are accompanied by a rotation of the ruling elite, which takes the blame for each new problem.

The backlash of the Russia-Ukraine war is likely to be considerable, especially if it is accompanied by trade wars, including between Ukraine and Belarus. Vladimir Putin, moreover, is likely to demand further reassurances of loyalty from his perceived subordinates in the Russian "sphere," among which the leader of Belarus remains prominent. Thus the election is likely to be fought less on the principles of restoring democracy and fair politics than security, the economy, wages and pensions, trade, and issues related to war. And no matter how unfair the practices of elections in Belarus, there are nonetheless ways to reach the voters and provide them with an alternative path to the future.

Lukashenka's support, it can be posited, is not only about his dominance over the state media and personal charisma; it is also about the lack of a convincing alternative, someone who can identify with the average worker, come up with a viable reform program, and offer some evidence of the ability or potential to govern. If there are no such alternatives, the average voter may contemplate, then it might be better to leave things as they are.

TALKS ON UKRAINE IN MINSK: DOES BELARUS START ITS WAY OUT OF SELF-ISOLATION?

VALERY KAVALEUSKI

Amidst the Ukrainian crisis Belarus has been more active than ever since the beginning of 90s. At first sight it appears that the balancing act of Belarus regarding Russia's agression against Ukraine is a right one and corresponds to the long--term national interests. Among other things such approach creates favorable conditions to normalize relations with the United States and European Union. Yet, in order to count on real change in the international standing of Belarus, President Aliaksandr Lukashenka needs to make concrete steps inside Belarus.

Negotiations on Ukraine in Minsk on August 26 are the most important diplomatic event in the modern history of Belarus. This achievement, however, which some want to see as a victory of Belarusian diplomacy, is likely just a choice of the most convenient place and understanding that Belarus as a neighbor of Ukraine and Russia, should have a seat at the negotiations table.

In practice these talks are no more than an occasion for national foreign service to remind the world about Belarus. Lukashenka's role in the negotiations cannot be central due to his lack of independence, tainted international reputation and scarce resources of Belarus. Conciliatory rhetoric and charisma are not enough to materially influence such a complex conflict.

Still, the talks on Ukraine in Minsk reveal that special place of Belarus in the conflict. Supposedly, the event should add an impulse to a more positive perception of Belarus' sovereignty in the world. But only to perception, because Belarus remains extremely vulnerable in its domestic and international affairs, and positive changes are hard to notice.

Belarus is increasingly dependent on Russia in the spheres of economy, trade, investments, and finances. Foreign policy is constrained by the tight control from Moscow, especially over those initiatives that are directed at developing relations with the West. In addition to existing military facilities in Belarus, Russia opens new bases. Such processes happen not because ofthe healthy intergovernmental relations, but due to the strong pressure by Putin.

As a participant of the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union Belarus' commitments keep it very close to Russia. Mutual sanctions between the West and Russia create certain short-term opportunities for Belarus. However, Russia, while sinking deeper into the confrontation, will only become weaker and poorer, not stronger and richer. The debilitating effects of sanctions, expensive absorption of Crimea, cuts in energy exports and growing militarization will decrease the capability of Russia as a financier, investor, and buyer of Belarusian exports. Technologically backwards Russia will not be able to help Belarus modernize its economy toreorient its economy towards world markets.

In sum, Belarus is rigidly hitched to Russia in all dimensions. If such configuration persists, Belarus will go towards the bottom together with Russia. Moscow will not let Belarus flourish and Lukashenka strengthen his grip on power at the expense of weakening Russia and Putin. The Kremlin aims at deepening the dependence of Belarus while trying to prevent its normal relations with the West.

It cannot be ruled out that, recognizing mostly balanced position of Belarus on Ukraine, the U.S. and EU will attempt to calibrate the approaches towards Lukashenka's regime as well as the forms of interaction with it. There are such signs. However, these shifts cannot be considered as the actual normalization of relations. It is important to remember that the U.S. and EU will not change relations with the government of Belarus sharply and substantively only on the basis of "considerate Lukashenka's position on Ukraine".

Lukashenka tries to present himself as a force that both the West and Russia need. The reality is that Lukashenka has dire need for external support. It is of utmost importance to the Belarusian President that this time help comes from the West. This includes support of the IMF and unambiguous recognition by the West of sovereignty and independence of Belarus amidst Russian aggression against Ukraine. Besides, Lukashenka needs acknowledgment of the legitimacy of his personal power, especially in the context of presidential elections in Belarus in 2015.

In order to remove obstacles to real normalization with the U.S. and EU, Lukashenka first needs to make steps to revive political life in Belarus:

- release and provide full legal rehabilitation of political prisoners;
- create equal conditions for the electoral process;
- hold free and fair democratic elections.

The President of Belarus knows what he needs to do to start the way out of the international self-isolation. Unfortunately, Lukashenka's fear of political competition, his greed for power and dismal state of Belarusian economy make this scenario unlikely. It is telling that for a long time authoritarian regime in Belarus has not even tried to imitate attempts of the public dialogue with opposition forces. Instead, Belarusian diplomacy made it an ultimate strategy forcing the West to accept the situation in Belarus as normal.

However, stubborn efforts to de-demonize and legitimize the political regime of Lukashenka in its current form will be fruitless. There can be a brief effect that would be followed by the West rolling back to complete antagonism towards the regime. Another "elections" à la Lukashenka would be sufficient to produce the disillusionment again, albeit quite predictable given the existing record.

Vulnerability of Belarus before the Kremlin, aggressive po-

licy of Moscow and deepening confrontation between the West and Russia are key external descriptives of the moment for Belarus. Attempts of the Lukashenka regime to change the perceptions in the West instead of practical steps to revive public political life and reform national economy will lead to heavy consequences for the sovereignty and independence of Belarus.

Note: Valery Kavaleuski is a graduate of the School of Foreign Service in Georgetown University. From 1998 till 2006 he served as a Belarusian diplomat. Belarusian version of this text was published in Belarusian periodical "Naša Niva" on August 24, 2014

SVIATLANA KUL-SIALVIERSTAVA: SEPTEMBER 17 IS AN AMBIGUOUS DATE

This year's September marks the 75th anniversary of the unification of the Western Belarusian lands with the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic and the partition of the Polish state between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. Belarusian Review asked SVIATLANA KUL-SIALVIERSTAVA, Professor of the Janka Kupala State University of Hrodna and Białystok University of Technology, how these events should be interpreted today.

Belarusian Review: *What does the date of 17 September mean for the Belarusian nation?*

Sviatlana Kul-Sialvierstava: 17 September is an ambiguous date. It can be celebrated as a day of national reunification. On the other hand, this reunion looked like the transfer of two brothers from different prisons into one, the worst of the two. I would advise not celebrating it, just to commemorate. Eduard Mazko (Belarusian historian and poet, who died early in 2011) once developed the concept that interwar Western Belarus was the area where nation-building processes were taking place and a Belarusian subculture different from that of the Belarusian SSR was forming. This process was difficult and painful because it took place in the adverse conditions of pressure from the Polish state. However, it was taking place, which was not the case in our eastern lands after the extermination period of 1927-37. If 17 September had not occurred, we might have had Hrodna as our own Lviv as well as a different level of national identity.

BR: *How does the date of 17 September affect relations between Belarusians and Poles?*

SK-S: It does not affect it since both our nations were victims. I live both in Poland and Belarus. Misfits can be found on both sides of the border. I believe that if a Belarusian handed in a collection of documents "Belarus under the heel of Polish invaders" (this was issued just before 17 September) to a Pole, and the Pole will not call the Hrodna region *Kresy*, everything will be fine.

Interview conducted by Andrzej Tichomirow

IN EUPHORIA OF THE "RUSSIAN WORLD": "WEST-RUS'IAN" REACTION TO THE EVENTS IN UKRAINE

ANDRZEJ TICHOMIROW

Since the beginning of 2014, the political situation in Europe has changed dramatically. The bloody events on the Maidan in Kiev, the change of power in Ukraine, the Russian military intervention, and the annexation of Ukraine's Crimea by Russia have destroyed the current architecture of international relations. The war on the territories of Ukraine's regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, its scope and conduct demonstrate that imperial ambitions have become one of the main objectives of Russia's current leadership and a large part of its population.

Overt military intervention and political pressure are accompanied by strong advocacy for war; its scope very much resembles Cold War propaganda. In a variety of alternatives, a significant part of the population which is capable of receiving information only in Russian has willingly supported the main points of the Russian media discourse. This conclusion applies not only to Russia proper, but also to large parts of the population of Ukraine (this discourse was also directly aimed at inciting artificial separatism and called for war in the country), the Baltic States, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Belarus.

The case of the Belarusian media space is quite revealing. It is characterized by complete subordination of the main media resources (particularly TV and press) to the state for the last 10-15 years, forcing out alternative points of view presented by a few independent newspapers and online resources into „reservations." At the same time, unrestricted access to Russian television has still been allowed. This has resulted in the fact that for a large part of Belarus' population Russian TV channels have become a sort of „the window on the world." The greater professionalism of Russian TV channels and the intrusive Russification policies in Belarus were the reason these media resources have enjoyed a significant level of confidence. An additional peculiarity was the fact that during various conflicts between the leaders of Belarus and Russia, Russian television channels transmitted sharp criticism towards the Belarusian political regime and were thus perceived as „independent", „objective" or more open. In the context of the information war and the aggression of Russia against Ukraine, Russian media has become one of the most effective tools to influence Belarusian citizens.

The attitude of the Belarusian state media toward the events in Ukraine could be called ambiguous. It was evident that they quite predictably were waiting for a reaction of the Belarusian authorities. At the same time, they used media vocabulary and rhetoric similar to the Russian in describing both the events on Maidan and the actual Russian military

action against Ukraine.

After the fairly negative attitude of the Belarusian authorities on the issue of Crimea's annexation, the position of Belarusian state television and newspapers has become much more moderate. It is remarkable that they have started trying to diversify the coverage of events in Ukraine.

Belarusian independent media resources have merely openly supported the Ukrainian side. They try to cover the events emphasizing the solidarity of Belarusian society with Ukraine and supporting the resistance of the Ukrainian people. In a sense, the Belarusian media space has also become a „battleground" between pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian views.

In addition to the above-mentioned media resources, attention should be paid to the so-called „new West-Rus'ian" discourse. The negative reaction of the proponents of this discourse to the 2013-14 Euromaidan events was very clear. Using the „scientific style", authors of the resource zapadrus.su fairly quickly began to multiply this discourse aimed at proving the thesis of the „genetic link" of the protesters with „the West"; Ukrainian statehood was portrayed as weak and artificial.[1] At the same time, Russia was presented as an example of a „strong state" and even „established democracy." Official Belarusian media described the Euromaidan events in a similar way, since any mass protest was a public challenge to the government and a clear marker of „instability."

The clear euphoria of modern fans of „West-Rus'ism" started when Russian troops entered the territory of the Crimean peninsula, followed by „the referendum" on March 16, 2014 and the subsequent Russian annexation of Crimea. The events of March 18, 2014 (i.e the announcement of the Crimea's annexation) were commented on as follows: „Russia has taken the road of unification of the Russian world. This is what we must remember. This should be remembered by our descendants „[2]. Some of the authors at zapadrus.su were even invited to a special talk show at ONT, one of the state-run TV channels in Belarus. There they promoted ideas of the „voluntary" nature of the „referendum" in the Crimea, Russia's „historical rights" and the lack of „legitimate power" in Ukraine [3].

Further arguments regarding this event were focused on support of the so-called „Russian Spring", i.e. on the fueling of separatist sentiments in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. [4] For these authors, such support of armed confrontation became proof of Russia's „revival", the reality of the „Russian World" and the „unity" of Belarusians and Ukrainians under this political concept.

In addition to this, at zapadrus.su one can find various types of „analyses" which on a rather amateurish and illiterate level are trying to prove the theses of the inevitability of the aligning of the „Russian world" with Russia and the lack of ethnic and cultural differences between the three East Slavic nations. This is traditionally accompanied by anti-Western rhetoric. A typical example here are the texts by Vsevolod Shimov. His texts contain sets of different political and philosophic terms (usually borrowed from contemporary Russian political science literature) and argue that Belarus and Ukraine should be within the „coordinates of Russian civilization"[5]. In addition, the thesis of the non-independent character of the Belarusian language is very clearly stressed by this author in another article[6]. Vsevolod Shimov, a person who received an education and scientific degree in independent Belarus, openly writes about the „artificiality" and „violence" of Belarusization. Moreover, he states that the Belarusian language is only a dialect of Russian and at the same time shows his absolute illiteracy in the sphere of philology. It is important to emphasize the fact that for Shimov „Western Russia" is a certain existing reality. For him, this is not just a certain historical name, but the real territory.

The Ukrainian events of 2013-2014 caused a clear activation of pro-Russian Belarusian humanists who openly expressed their support for Russia's annexation of Crimea and waging war against Ukraine. Further free distribution of this kind of ideas can lead to their use in supporting other forms of aggression against Russia's neighbors. Therefore, the existence of Belarus in the „Russian-speaking" information area only increases the abundance of the modern version of „West-Rus'ism."

REFERENCES:

[1] Авторы сайта «Западная Русь» о «евромайдане» (10.12.2013).

[2] 18 марта 2014 года. Хроника эпохального события (18.03.2014). (апошняе наведванне 24.08.2014)

[3] Белорусское экспертное сообщество о референдуме в Крыму (19.03.2014).

[4] А. Филатов, Крымский референдум как аспект геополитики в цивилизационном измерении (20.03.2014).

[5] В. Шимов, Ритмы Русской цивилизации (12.07.2014).

[6] В. Шимов, Истоки языкового сепаратизма в Белоруссии (05.11.2013).

Editor's note: the concept of West-Rus',ism has been covered in a number of previous issues of Belarusian Review (v. 25, #2 and #4).

QUOTES

We strongly believe that the experience of maintaining a constructive dialogue and cooperation in the CEI can come in handy while revisiting and adapting the Eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy of the European Union. It can also be used as a mechanism to keep implementing the Eastern Partnership Initiative that comprises six partner states,

Alena Kupchyna (Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister)

September 16, 2014, BelTA

ECONOMY

GEORGIAN AGRICULTURE: EFFECTS OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE EU

The EU Eastern Partnership project has recently become complicated. Nevertheless, three out of six states have signed the Association Agreement with the EU. Though still in the implementation phase, this step has facilitated the three's pace of alignment with Brussels. Belarusian Review asked Georgian agriculture expert GIORGI TSIKLAURI about prospects as well as limitations the Association Agreement brings to its signatories.

Belarusian Review: *Along with Moldova and Ukraine, Georgia has signed an Association Agreement with the EU. What does it mean for an economy that is predominantly agricultural?*

Giorgi Tsiklauri: Indeed, this is a big step toward integrating Georgia into European markets. Georgian products have been on the EU market before, but the Association Agreement will certainly add impetus to this process as well as significantly expand its scale. Even though it will take some time before the agreement is ratified by all the EU member states (Georgia ratified it on July 18th), the market mechanisms have already started to act.

BR: *Will Georgian agriculture suffer from the implementation of the agreement in the long run? Georgia is a small state and will benefit little from free trade.*

GT: Not exactly so. It is true that the Georgian market is relatively small. However, the situation is to our benefit in the long run. It is now very popular within the Union to buy bio products. Georgian agriculture is in a position to offer to become a place for European bio farming. In certain areas, especially the highlands, we have soil which provides an opportunity to produce high quality bio products suitable for European markets.

BR: *But don't you think that much more sophisticated EU agricultural producers will benefit from the agreement more and eventually dominate?*

GT: That may be the case initially, but we should understand that the agreement is a tool for establishing a free trade area with the EU. For now, Georgian agriculture is suffering from the domination of, in many cases, low quality Turkish agricultural products. The government has almost no tariff protection to help out its own producers. With the implementation of the free trade area, there is an expectation that standards will have to improve; and secondly, this will stimulate domestic agricultural production to not only supply the Georgian market, but raise the quality of production to satisfy strict European standards…

BR: *…similar to the situation when the Russian embargo helped revive the Georgian wine industry?*

GT: Yes. Now there is an understanding that the Russian ban on the import of Georgian wines actually not only helped improve the state of winery in Georgia, but also motivated producers to seek new markets. Thus, put in the position in which the industry had to reinvent itself in the search for new markets, such a situation positively boosted the whole industry. A similar effect is expected in the Georgian agriculture sector with free trade.

BR: *You sound optimistic. However, Georgia is not in a strong negotiating position with the EU, given its membership ambitions. This may mean that generally EU states may manage to get conditions more beneficial for them and less beneficial for Georgia as the process develops.*

GT: That is the major concern. Nevertheless, there is one detail which is missing. That detail is the fact that Georgia is not (yet) a EU member. So far, however, there is no evidence that Georgia is losing anything on the way toward closer cooperation with the EU. On the contrary, many areas have been reformed and significantly improved, such as legislation, rule of law, economic liberalization. A similar effect is expected to be achieved in agriculture. We also hope that access to the EU market will help Georgian producers grow, as they have never had access to the most important market in the world, one with great purchasing power and size. What we see now is small farms becoming more enthusiastic regarding their future. The government, on the other side, with the help of EU financing, is developing a program of support for smaller producers. We will still have to observe whether these measures will be successful over the course of the next several years.

BR: *Our readers would be interested as to whether Belarus should aim to get wider access to EU markets? As you know, Minsk has been active in the economic integration with Russia.*

GT: As far as I know, the main problem is that while Belarusian production is well known in former communist bloc states for its quality and durability, it is less well-known in Western Europe. So, it becomes an issue of competitiveness on the EU markets. I believe that if Belarus had access to EU markets, it would greatly improve its position in negotiations with Russia. Belarus as an equal member of the Eastern Partnership program has all the capabilities. Not to mention, it has historically been much closer to Europe. Georgia would obviously support our neighbor on this way.

Interview conducted by David Erkomaishvili

We would be pleased to receive your ideas, suggestions, questions, or comments at:
thepointjournal@gmail.com

CULTURE & LANGUAGE

FR. ALEXANDER NADSON: BELARUSIANS SHOULD GO TO GOD THEIR OWN WAY AND IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

Recently, much has been told about the Russian Orthodox Church as one of the main promoters of the so-called "Russian World" (Russkiy mir) concept, which among other countries includes Belarus. The consequences of this sort of "political Orthodoxy" and the role of the Belarusian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church in Belarus are being discussed with Fr. ALEXANDER NADSON, *the Apostolic Visitor for Belarusian Greek Catholic faithful abroad.*

Belarusian Review: *In today's Belarus, the Russian Orthodox Church is the largest religious denomination. At the same time, while not denying the sovereignty of the state, the leadership of this church declares that Belarus together with Russia and Ukraine constitutes the core of the so-called "Russian world". What does such approach of the Moscow church hierarchy mean for Belarus as a political entity?*

Fr. Alexander Nadson: This question could be best addressed to the officials of the Orthodox Church. On the one hand, I would not want to interfere in their internal affairs, but on the other hand I cannot fully understand the situation of our Orthodox brothers in Belarus. If Belarusians exist as a nation, and if there are many autocephalous Orthodox churches in various countries, why the Belarusian Orthodox Church should be a part of the Moscow Patriarchate? But I want to emphasize once again that this is the question that the Orthodox believers should decide for themselves. For example, as for the Catholic Church, it is universal, but each country has its own hierarchy. So, when Belarus became independent, in the first instance the Holy Father gave us our Catholic hierarchy.

BR: *According to the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church the concept of "Russian world" is based on the Russian language and culture. Is it therefore possible to speak of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus as a Belarusian church?*

Fr.AN: I do not know, whether it is the church's business to deal with these matters. The task of the church is to bring the God's Word and the message of the salvation to the world in the most accessible form for each individual. And this most accessible form is to address people in the language of the nation they belong to. It is not my goal as a priest to go and recast a Belarusian into someone else. We take the world as it is and we bring this great message of the salvation for all mankind. There is no need to become someone else to be a son of God, because God has a place for everyone. Thus I do not understand why one needs to bring the message of the salvation of the mankind to the Belarusians in a different language and in a different form than the ordinary Belarusian one. Remember that after the Ascension of Jesus into heaven the apostles were given the gift of mastering different languages, so that they could bring the message of the salvation for all mankind in all the languages of all peoples of the world. And there has been neither better, nor worse languages!

BR: *How does this Russo-centric position of the Russian Orthodox Church influence the Belarusian national identity?*

Fr.AN: I think that this position does affect the identity of the nation. Belarusians should go to God their own way and in their own language. Why is it necessarily to somehow adjust or limit this? Although it is an internal affair of the Orthodox Church, any church hierarchy should refer to faithful in the language of the people to whom they bring the God's Word.

BR: *Why does the Russian Orthodox Church still have such a negative attitude towards the Greek Catholic Church not only in Belarus but also, for example, in Ukraine?*

Fr.AN: Unfortunately, this is the way it is and this is nothing new. Remember that the Russian government with the help of the Russian Church abolished the Greek Catholic Church in 1839. It appears that the Moscow Patriarchate still believes that the Catholics of the Eastern rite are certain nonsense and that these believers must be Orthodox. The Unite Church in Belarus was eliminated by force, secular force. However, Jesus never used force and we do not use it either. Therefore it is not only unpleasant but also painful, because we want to be brothers with all, including our Orthodox brothers.

BR: *In the historical context of the Greek Catholic Church is sometimes treated as a national church of the Belarusian people. How do you see the future of the denomination in Belarus?*

Fr.AN: Indeed, there was a time when the vast majority of Belarusians were Catholics of the Eastern rite. But I would never want the church to be called national, because the church is universal which has place for everyone. Belarusians have been part of this great Church of Christ which includes different nations, different languages, different rituals, and different forms to glorify God. Note that Uniate or the Eastern rite of the Catholic Church is not something new. For example, you can visit southern Italy – there are Catholic dioceses of the Eastern rite there which never were Orthodox. In turn, I pray and hope that the Greek Catholic Church in Belarus will develop. This development is not directed against the Orthodox Church or any other denomination. This is the need of the people's souls of to pray in a certain form. God is great and almighty - while we, people, are limited. But we can glorify him in different ways, as they are all for the glory of God.

Interview conducted by Kiryl Kascian

LEANID LYČ:
PEOPLE CANNOT CREATE ANYTHING ORIGINAL WITHOUT THEIR NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Language policies in Belarus, the Belarusian language role in society and the status of Russian as the official language in Belarus still produce much discussion in Belarus. Today these are the topics for our interview with Professor Dr. LEANID LYČ, *author of numerous monographs on the history of Belarusian culture, language policies and ethnic relations in Belarus.*

Belarusian Review: *Since 1995 bilingualism was established at the state level in Belarus. How do you evaluate this decision?*

Leanid Lyč: Official bilingualism fixed in Belarus after the Aliaksandr Lukašenka became president, is not consistent with international practice. There are bilingual, trilingual, etc. countries. However, these countries are truly multi-ethnic, as in their territories have since ancient times been inhabited by representatives of different ethnic groups. Belarus is a mono-ethnic country with Belarusians as the only indigenous people. Russians, Ukrainians and other ethnic groups living in Belarus are in fact ethnic communities here. Normally, no country grants status of a state language to such languages. Therefore, making Russian a second state language in Belarus was inconsistent with international practice related to regulation of language processes. International science has very extensive research on the issue of bilingualism related to given countries introducing or trying to implement bilingualism. One can refer to the works by Karl Kautsky. According to him, official bilingualism is a temporary phenomenon. There is ruthless struggle between languages up to elimination of the language. Usually one language wins, regardless of whether it is native to the majority of the population. This all depends on how the authorities' vision of the language policy transpires. Therefore, as a result of the specific policies pursued by the authorities even the language of the autochtonous population may lose its position in the historical territory.

BR: *How has the practical implementation of the language policies of the Belarusian state since 1995 affected the Belarusian society?*

LL: At first glance, this looks as something progressive since no language is prohibited. But who will choose a Belarusian-language kindergarten or school for their child, if they would like him/her to continue studies at the university and pursue successful professional career? And there is always only the Russian language there. Thus, even the greatest patriots limit their aspirations. Additionally, what a injury is this to the the child's mind and personal development. The way out, as I see it, is that the state officially recognizes and publicly admitted its mistake and announces that, for example, from the new year it starts returning to our national roots, and particularly to our language. People need to prepare.

In the deep layers of their souls our people retained their national substance. Just remember how our society awakened when in the late 1980s it felt that something can be done on a national wave. Though, even then our intelligentsia was Russified in the second, and even third generation. Belarusian village was also not the same. Our village was Russified through radio, television and cinema. In addition, since 1962 *"Sieĺskaja hazieta"* (Rural newspaper) has been published only in Russian. We should also not forget about the very large destructive role accomplished by the rural intelligentsia educated in Russian. There are many factors that wean us from the Belarusian language, so that we do not live our lives. However, I believe that even today it is enough only to blow at our national coals and it would immediately kindle a fire. But who will do it?..

BR: *What measures should be taken for a wider return of the Belarusian language to everyday life?*

LL: The current state of the language shows that it cannot come back to life only through private efforts and initiatives of amateurs. Hence, the national intelligentsia lost its active role and it has no capacity to do so. The fate of the Belarusian language today is completely dependent on the state, as it is in the state who controls education. The State may raise the language of any disease. A profound example here is the role of the State of Israel in the revival of the Hebrew language.

I remember our revival in the early 1990s. The return of the Belarusian language in public life has gone so soundly that if this process was not interrupted in 1995 and continued for another two or three years, the Russian language would not have had a chance to obtain its current status through a referendum. When the Language Law was adopted on January 26, 1990, no one has so actively studied the Belarusian language, as our officials did. If Lukašenka suddently starts speaking Belarusian, everyone would try to follow him. Therefore, the fate of our language depends not on scientists, but on politicians. The population speaks a language which serves the country's political life.

BR: *Is it possible that Belarus as a country and Belarusians as a nation could exist without the Belarusian language?*

LL: I think that people outside of their native language are not a full-fledged nation. This nation is ethnically ill. Without their language these people do not create anything original, as they repeat, and in the worst manner, the accomplishments of the nation whose language and culture they embraced. Such people will exist as a certain society, but it will not pose anything distinct what could enrich cultural diversity of the world.

Interview conducted by Hanna Vasilevich

Note: Leanid Lyč is a doctor of historical sciences, professor. He is the author of monographs on the history of Belarusian culture, language policy and ethnic relations in Belarus in the twentieth century. He served as a Chairman of the Toponymic Commission of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus (1992 – 1996).

BELARUSIAN LANGUAGE PROMOTION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT

CURT WOOLHISER

Strengthening of the Belarusian language status in Belarus is not an easy issue, since a whole array of political, legal, economic, socio-cultural and socio-psychological factors come into play whenever attempts are made, whether by governments, non-governmental organizations, social movements or other actors, to change established patterns of language use. Language policy doesn't exist in a vacuum, and any efforts at "status planning" are highly dependent not only on objective factors such as the level of commitment and competence of government agencies and/or non--governmental actors and the material and legal resources at their disposal, but also on culture-specific systems of beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes regarding language, that is, what the American sociolinguist Harold Schiffman calls "linguistic culture." Language regime change is not simply a matter of adopting new language legislation and government regulations, or funding certain language promotion initiatives; in a context where there is no general consensus on the very need for change, it also involves a lengthy process of changing a society's linguistic culture - influencing public perceptions, predispositions and attitudes, which in turn may only gradually lead to widespread changes in actual linguistic behavior.

Until there is a fundamental change in the way the country is governed, or there is a groundswell of public support for a change in language policy, it seems unlikely that we will see any major new initiatives from the Belarusian authorities. It is thus largely up to Belarusian civil society to try to self-organize and, to the extent possible, to exert pressure on government agencies at all levels, as well as to take the lead in "marketing" the Belarusian language to the public at large. Fortunately, Belarus has many qualified and highly committed language advocates who understand that urgent action is needed to keep the language question on the agenda and to defend the rights of Belarusian speakers. Indeed, language advocacy organizations such as the Francišak Skaryna Belarusian Language Society and the Society for Belarusian Schools have, in spite of the authorities' generally indifferent and at times even hostile attitude toward their activities, helped to bring about positive changes in certain areas.

As regards specific measures that could be taken to improve the situation, I should note that there is little that I would add to the proposals laid out in the Belarusian Language Society's programmatic document, "Strategy for the Development of the Belarusian Language in the 21st Century" (http://tbm-mova.by/mova.html), which provides a fairly detailed blueprint for a language policy that would be more effective in expanding the role of the language in Belarusian society. Developed with the participation of leading Belarusian linguists and language policy experts, and taking into account the experience of other endangered and minoritized language communities in Europe and beyond, the BLS's "Strategy" is of course still very much a work in progress, and will no doubt undergo further revisions as the socio-political situation in Belarus evolves.

Probably the single most important language policy measure that would at least provide a legal framework for increasing the public use of Belarusian would be to change the wording of the 1998 language law, replacing "Belarusian and/or Russian" with "Belarusian and Russian." This change, which could help ensure actual legal equality for the two state languages, is among the amendments to the language law proposed by the BLS. The BLS has also drawn up a new bill on "State Support for the Belarusian Language" that stipulates the functions and obligations of government agencies in the area of language provision.

A minor victory has already been achieved with the passage of an amendment to the "Law on Private and Legal Persons' Appeals" which requires that government agencies reply to citizens' petitions and inquiries in the language in which they were received. The passage of this amendment appears to be, at least in part, the result of effective lobbying by the BLS and other civil society initiatives, such as Ihar Sluchak's "Official Documentation in Belarusian" (Spravavodstva pa-bielarusku) letter-writing campaign.

But simply having laws on the books is insufficient for actually increasing the use of Belarusian; there have to be specific guidelines for language use in various domains of public life, in particular government, education, the media and the service sector, and penalties imposed on those who violate the right of Belarusian-speaking citizens to receive services in their language. These issues are addressed at length in the BLS's draft bill on "State Support for the Belarusian Language." However, there are three obstacles to the adoption and implementation of such a program of state language support: first, there is little evidence that the Belarusian authorities at present are sincerely committed to ensuring true parity between Belarusian and Russian; second, the absence of any genuine rule of law in Belarus under the current political regime renders the use of legal mechanisms to ensure the equality of Belarusian and Russian highly problematic; third, as recent independent opinion polls have shown, the level of public support for expanded use of Belarusian in the public sphere, while significant, is not yet at the point where one could say that there is a broad consensus on language policy issues.

Another thing to bear in mind when discussing language policy options in Belarus is the very real problem of language attrition among members of the "titular" nationality. In this regard, the Belarusian situation is fundamentally different from the Baltic Republics of the USSR in the late 1980s,

where although Russian had a dominant position in certain social domains and there was a significant influx of Russian-speaking immigrants, the indigenous populations remained overwhelmingly loyal to their ancestral languages, and Estonian and Lithuanian, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Latvian, were still widely used in education, the media, publishing and other prestigious social domains. The situation in Belarus is also different from that in places such as Catalonia and Galicia in Spain or the province of Québec in Canada, where, despite a recent history of overt discrimination against the indigenous languages (indeed, under the Franco regime, Catalan and Galician were virtually banned from all public use), the speakers of these languages likewise did not shift to the dominant national languages. When language policies in Spain and Canada began to change in the 1960s and 1970s, the main focus of language "normalization" was simply expanding the use of these languages in the high prestige domains of government, education, the media and business – in most cases, one didn't have to worry about Catalans or Galicians or Québecois not being able to speak their own language, since it was still dominant in the family and in other informal communication networks. The primary challenge in places like Catalonia or Québec was to ensure that immigrants, whether from other parts of the country, or from overseas, acquired and used the indigenous language rather than the nationally dominant Spanish (Castilian) or English. In contrast, in Belarus, as in central, eastern and southern Ukraine, as well as in Ireland and Scotland, a large segment of the indigenous population doesn't have active speaking, reading and writing proficiency in the national languages; language policy in these countries must thus simultaneously grapple with the problem of revitalizing the languages in families and communities and "status planning" issues relating to their use in the public sphere.

Given the specifics of the language situation in Belarus, it seems to me that, at least initially, it would be preferable to employ incentives rather than penalties to promote the use of Belarusian. In the sphere of education, obviously one of the main priorities should be to expand the network of Belarusian-medium schools and truly bilingual Belarusian-Russian schools, as well as bilingual Belarusian-Polish, Belarusian-English, Belarusian-German, and Belarusian-French schools. This means not only making such schools more accessible to all parents who want their children to receive a Belarusian-medium or bilingual education, but also to make them attractive to parents who might otherwise be inclined to send their children to Russian-medium schools. Rather than simply denying access to Russian-medium schools, there should be a focus on promoting the image of Belarusian-medium and bilingual schools as educational leaders through targeted funding from both public and private sources, ensuring that they have state-of-the art facilities and innovative curricula and teaching methods, as well as recruiting the best and brightest teachers by offering higher than average salaries. Such "flagship" schools could be made even more attractive by establishing partnerships and educational exchanges with leading schools in EU countries, which would also help teachers at these schools keep abreast of best practices in European public education. It is also important for Belarusian language advocates to publicize the cognitive and academic advantages associated with a genuinely bilingual education, as shown in the results of numerous studies of bilingual educational institutions in EU countries.

Even in schools where most instruction is in Russian, it seems to me that new, more innovative approaches to teaching Belarusian language and literature could have a positive impact on the younger generation's language attitudes. For all the stories I have heard of passionate and dedicated teachers of Belarusian language and literature who instilled in their pupils a genuine and lasting love for the language, there are, unfortunately, just as many cases of young people who developed an aversion to Belarusian in school due to bad experiences with poorly-trained, uninspiring teachers, who in many cases do not themselves even speak Belarusian outside the classroom.

In this respect, the Irish experience in the sphere of education is quite instructive. Observers of the Irish language revival movement have argued that one of the main reasons the government's Irish language policy for many decades failed to achieve any significant results was not only because it placed the main responsibility for revitalizing the language on the schools, but also because the dominant approach to Irish language instruction was based on formal grammar drills and an excessive focus on the written language rather than on oral communication. Such pedagogical practice results from a misguided notion that teaching language is equivalent to teaching subjects such as mathematics, geography and history, when in fact language learning is a far more complex cognitive process requiring gradual maturation, constant and diverse input, meaningful social interaction and reinforcement.

Part of the problem, of course, is that Belarusian in Russian-medium schools in Belarus is often taught as a first language, when in fact it is essentially a foreign language for many urban pupils. If the goal of Belarusian language instruction in these schools is to produce fluent speakers, there needs to be more of an emphasis on actually using the language in a variety of both formal and informal contexts. While it is of course important for students to have a grasp of grammatical and linguistic concepts and have a knowledge of both classic and contemporary Belarusian literature, this should not be the exclusive focus of Belarusian language lessons in Russian-medium schools. A great deal more thought also has to go into the image that is associated with Belarusian in the language classroom; it seems to me that all too often, whether consciously or unconsciously, the message is conveyed that while Belarusian is an important part of the nation's cultural heritage, akin to folk costume, traditional village crafts and folk songs, it is, like them, ultimately of little relevance to modern urban life.

While Belarusian-language immersion in the schools can

contribute to the acquisition of active speaking skills by children from Russian-speaking families, the question remains: what language will children in such schools speak outside the classroom? Just as important is what happens after students in Belarusian-medium schools graduate, whether they continue their studies at a university or technical school or enter the working world. Unless Belarusian language provision in higher education is more widely available, any potential gains from an expanded role for Belarusian in primary and secondary education will be jeopardized. The establishment of a new, entirely Belarusian-medium university is of course something that Belarusian language advocates have long demanded, but given the authorities' opposition to this idea, it seems unlikely that such an initiative, even if it were to be largely privately funded, would be feasible. Still, when political conditions are more favorable (most likely, in the post-Lukašenka era), it would probably be more effective in the short term to create a new Minsk-based institution (for example, along the lines of the Ukrainian-language Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) rather than attempting to completely "Belarusianize" existing universities. Ultimately, branch campuses of such a university could be established in other cities, including some that currently have no accredited higher educational institutions. As in the case of new Belarusian-medium schools, an entirely new Belarusian-medium university would be better positioned than the established institutions to introduce innovative new programs and experiment with new teaching methods (including, perhaps, distance learning). To promote the process of "Belarusianization" of government and business, graduate-level programs in public policy, law and business administration could be made the centerpiece of such an institution.

Given current realities in Belarus, perhaps the only alternative at this stage would, with support from EU sources and private donors, be to establish a private Belarusian-language university, or bilingual Belarusian-English institution (akin to universities in the Netherlands and Scandinavia, where English is used alongside the national languages in certain degree programs) outside the country, either in Lithuania or Poland. Some had hopes that the European Humanities University might evolve into such an institution, but one gets the impression that the internal language policy of the EHU has tended for the most part to reproduce that of higher education in Belarus, giving priority to Russian (although there are currently plans to increase course offerings in English). Moreover, given the humanities focus of the EHU, there is still an urgent need for an independent, Belarusian-language institution with professional programs in such areas as public policy, law, and business administration.

Outside the sphere of education, there are a number of areas where creative and committed Belarusian language advocates could have a significant impact. As I've already noted, one of the key problems in language revitalization is making the language of the school also the language of the home and the community. There have been some interesting initiatives to create networks of Belarusian-speaking young parents and their children, such as the website Našyja dzieci, but such efforts are still quite limited in their reach. There is still an urgent need not only to increase the availability of Belarusian-language preschool education, but also to offer a greater variety of Belarusian-language activities for small children and their families (summer day camps, fine arts instruction, etc.). As in the case of Belarusian-language schooling, if such programs were perceived to be superior in content to their Russian-language counterparts, it would be possible to "recruit" a greater number of children from Russian-speaking households.

In addition, a great deal more has to be done to help build and sustain networks of "new speakers," that is, adult learners of Belarusian, not only in Minsk, but in other cities as well. In order to encourage adult learners to join the community of Belarusian speakers, there have to be adequate opportunities not only for adult language learning (for those with only passive knowledge of the language) but also active language use. One encouraging recent initiative is the creation of an informal Belarusian language group for adults, *Mova ci kava*, in Minsk (interestingly enough, the first *Mova ci kava* group was founded in Moscow for Belarusian expats). Judging from the public response to this initiative, informal, free courses of this type might be a very effective way of expanding Belarusian-speaking networks in the cities.

In addition to free language courses, another way to encourage the development of Belarusian-speaking social networks would be to organize free or reduced-rate courses and seminars taught in Belarusian on topics of current interest such as starting a business, social entrepreneurship, environmental advocacy, web design, and so on. A social infrastructure for the use of Belarusian could also be created from the bottom up through various clubs, associations, amateur sports leagues and other special interest groups (and not only those dealing with Belarusian heritage and culture) for which Belarusian would be their working language.

It is also important to have public spaces where the Belarusian language can be freely used in informal communication. A few such Belarusian-language "islands" have already been created, for example the U karotkaje gallery and Lohvinaŭ bookstore, and the youth-oriented community arts center Art Siadziba, although their appeal, it would appear, is limited to a fairly narrow stratum of the literarily and artistically inclined. I've also heard that a new café, Alba kava, has recently opened in Minsk, where not only the menus are in Belarusian, but the management insists that employees use the language with customers. This is unquestionably a step in the right direction, but it has to be borne in mind that this is only a single café in a city of 1.8 million people!

If there were sufficient support from municipal authorities in Belarus, it might even be possible to emulate recent initiatives in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, where entire Irish-speaking neighborhoods have been created in the cities of Dublin and Belfast in order to create a foothold for the Irish language in urban areas. The develop-

ment of such districts in Belarusian cities, centered on housing cooperatives or newly-constructed condominium-type housing, would guarantee a critical mass of parents in at least certain parts of the city supporting Belarusian-medium education for their children and would potentially facilitate the development of a neighborhood service infrastructure in which Belarusian would be the dominant working language. In the universities, it might likewise be advantageous to create student housing reserved for Belarusian speakers, following the model of University College Dublin, which has set aside a student residence for Irish-speaking graduates of the gaelscoileanna (Irish language immersion schools). However, I anticipate that some Belarusian language advocates would strongly object to the creation of what might be perceived as linguistic "ghettoes" or "reservations," even if they helped foster Belarusian-dominant spheres of communication in at least some urban enclaves, while no doubt the authorities would be strongly opposed to any measures promoting any sort of Belarusian "linguistic separatism."

As far as use of Belarusian in government agencies is concerned, ideally one would expect all government employees, particularly those whose duties involve any type of interaction with the public, to be able to demonstrate sufficient proficiency in Belarusian "to the degree necessary to fulfill their duties," as stated in the current language law. Of course, this would involve some sort of state language proficiency testing, which would no doubt prove extremely unpopular with the majority of current government employees. A more realistic policy, at least in the transitional period, would be to require government agencies to recruit at least some Belarusian-speaking personnel, as well as to offer bonuses to newly-hired Belarusian speakers and current employees willing to attend free Belarusian language classes and to commit to use of the language in their official capacity.

Similar incentives could also help encourage the use of Belarusian in the service sector, for example, the government could offer employees of service sector enterprises (both private and state-owned) a bonus if they attend free Belarusian language classes geared specifically toward customer service and make a commitment to use Belarusian in their work. Since the bonuses would be funded by the government, such employees would be subject to monitoring of their language use by state language inspectors. Service sector enterprises with a certain number of employees with the necessary language skills might also be offered tax rebates under the condition that they prominently display signs stating something along the lines of "We can serve you in Belarusian" and agree to periodic monitoring of their language practices. Since these would be voluntary programs involving incentives (bonuses or tax rebates for use of the language) rather than penalties (fines for non-use of the language, as for example in the Baltic States), it would potentially generate more positive attitudes toward use of Belarusian and would be less likely to lead to language-based conflicts.

Without the support of the government, however, even such modest Belarusian language promotion initiatives would be impossible. In the absence of such support, Belarusian language advocates could still undertake other projects to promote the use of the language in the service sector, for example by instituting a privately-funded prize to companies that use Belarusian to the fullest extent possible in their operations (including advertising, customer service, and internal communication and documentation). In recent years, Irish language promotion NGOs in a number of cities and towns in the Republic of Ireland have started competitions of this type, designed to reward and give public recognition to companies that have made the transition to using Irish as their working language.

As far as the use of Belarusian in what sociolinguists refer to as the "linguistic landscape" (public and commercial signage), as I've already noted, the situation in Belarus is in fact better than that of some other minoritized languages in Europe. Still, language legislation should stipulate clearly that signage should always include a Belarusian-language version, while permitting the optional use of parallel signage in other languages, including Russian, Polish and English (and even Yiddish and/or Hebrew for Belarusian-Jewish historical sites, which will be very important for Belarus tourism in the future). As far as advertising is concerned, perhaps it would be too cumbersome to require that all billboards and similar commercial texts be either exclusively in Belarusian or provide parallel Belarusian-language text; rather, it might be more effective to offer partial advertising subsidies to companies that choose to advertise their goods and services in Belarusian. Certainly, there is no shortage of advertising agencies ready and willing to produce Belarusian-language materials, as indicated by the quality and quantity of entries to the annual Adnak! festival of Belarusian-language advertising. Moreover, some well-known foreign companies, such as Samsung, Ford, Apple and Bosch, have already discovered that Belarusian-language advertising is an excellent way of drawing attention to their products (of course, if most advertising were in Belarusian, they might lose the advantage of novelty). Still, since surveys have shown that a significant percentage of Belarusians would like to see more advertising in the language, the national government and municipal authorities throughout Belarus should clearly be doing more to encourage both domestic and foreign companies to use Belarusian in their advertising campaigns.

I have to admit that I am somewhat perplexed, however, by such "language promotion" initiatives as the series of billboards by Samsung that have appeared in Minsk over the last two years, *Smak bielaruskaj movy* (The Flavor of Belarusian), and its sequel *Pryhažość/Bahaccie bielaruskaj movy* (The Beauty/Richness of Belarusian), which highlight various unique and distinctive Belarusian words, along with their Russian equivalents and illustrative pictures or photographs. It seems to me that placing a billboard out on the street showing a picture of a watermelon with the word kavun with its Russian counterpart arbuz is not particularly effective as a language promotion strategy; the impact would be far greater if there were more Belarusian-language labels and signs

in stores and markets. Moreover, I am not entirely sure that advertising the language itself as a "commodity," rather than using the language to advertise commodities and services that are in demand, is necessarily the best strategy. As sociolinguistic studies have demonstrated in a wide variety of contexts, language attitudes are rarely based solely on the intrinsic linguistic characteristics of a language or dialect (its "mellifluousness" or "uniqueness"); rather, it is the characteristics associated with their speakers that make the biggest difference. Still, if language promoters feel that advertising the language itself can have an effect on its use in public spaces, or at least on language attitudes, to my mind it would be more effective, psychologically, to have large, prominently displayed billboards in the center of Minsk and other cities, showing attractive, fashionably dressed young people with slogans such as "*Наша мова – беларуская*" or "*Мы гаворым па–беларуску*." Another billboard might show a salesperson serving a customer in a high-end store with the text: "*Мы абслугоўваем па–беларуску*" or "*Чаму б не па–беларуску?*"

For the development and consistent implementation of a strategy for promoting the Belarusian language, it would probably be most efficient to have a single government body responsible for language policy, similar to the language boards in Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. This language board would not be a "language police" along the lines of what was put in place in the Baltic States in the 1990s (i.e. it would not have the authority to levy fines), but would conduct public opinion research on language policy, would collect data on implementation of language legislation, and could offer advice and assistance to individuals or organizations wishing to pursue legal remedies for violations of their linguistic rights. It is curious that the monitoring of implementation of language legislation, as well as survey research on public attitudes in the sphere of language policy in Belarus, is currently done primarily by NGOs such as the Belarusian Language Society, the "Budźma" campaign, BISS and IISEPS. The absence of any state body responsible for coordinating and monitoring different aspects of language policy in Belarus once again reflects the government's lack of interest in ensuring actual equality of the country's two state languages.

QUOTES

It should be taken into account that some European partners do not consider Belarus as an important state since we have little raw materials and minerals. As a consequence, the attitude is differentiated. I mean the attitude of European countries to some other post-Soviet countries with the same and even bigger problems. However, these are large countries and they have resources, and Europe depends on them. We would like to continue our dialogue and are ready for this dialogue but on an equal basis however.

Uladzimir Makei (Belarus' Foreign Minister)
September 15, BelTA

HISTORY & MEMORY POLITICS

"… IT IS NOT IN VAIN THAT THE OLD DO NOT WISH FOR YOUTH TO EXPERIENCE WARS"

A NARRATION BY
LEV (LEIBA) M. SMILOVITSKY TO HIS SON LEONID



I never thought nor guessed that what my father narrated almost thirty years ago would be useful to me as a historian. My father's generation was fighting, these boys and youngsters born in 1923-1925 had not considered themselves special. Later they were called heroes because they won the war, and what a war!

20 years after that memorable conversation in Bajary (Minsk region), excerpts from which are presented below — I started collecting letters from 1941-1945 within the framework of the project "Unclaimed memory" for archives of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center (Tel Aviv University). However, my family have not preserved a single letter from the front by my father or to the front by his parents, my grandmother and grandfather.

Only this touching interview remained. Today I made up my mind to share it with you.

December 18, 1988
Bajary railway station (Minsk region).

"*Wait, in your story you have omitted such an important moment as your correspondence with your home. You left, and*

surely promised to write?

This is a special topic. I received the first letter from home in the railway station Kuzovatovo (a township in Russia's Ulyanovsk region – L.S.) in 1943. My mother wrote regularly; my father was illiterate. She informed me about their life. I regularly replied. Her letters gave me great joy. This is because for the first time in my life I experienced such long separation from my family, from anything I was used to. We had such savage conditions, though we were no city coddles. This transferred to us the acuteness of blood relations. We were not allowed to leave. I would have left even on foot, if they let me.

Would you have left?

I would have left on wings! What else would you have expected from a 17-year-old boy? Every letter from home gave me great joy; and letters did come… What letters could my mom write? Ordinary, simple, full of love. She just related about how they live, how they work.

Long letters?

Just two or three pages. Ordinary triangular letters without stamps. I was very much waiting for them. I did not keep them and not a single one has been preserved. Somehow I had not grasped their significance for the future. And where could I have saved them? They were around for a while and I did not remember what happened to them. What did one carry in his breast pocket? The Komsomol identity card, and the Red Army soldier ID book. That was all; we had no bedside tables, nor storerooms. Firstly, this wasn't peace time. Secondly, we did not think about the future nor about anything else. What did we think about? Of course, we lived for today. Only the way the grass grows.

However, with certainty that you were living the way you should? That there is no other way, i.e. that this is the only appropriate way?

Only this way! There was not even a shadow of doubt that we are fated to live any other way. Neither in the army, nor in the leadership.

And how did you learn about the end of war?

One late evening on May 8, 1945 we were on a march. Suddenly the column started the shouting: "War has ended!" At first we did not believe it; on the whole we were so used to the war, that it became a part of our life order and of our thoughts… Only a few hours later, when we realized that it was really the end of war there started a wholesale shooting spree. Everyone tried to shoot out his own reserve ammunition. With the end of war, it was not needed! One shot whatever he had; all were shooting in the air, and they were all yelling.

We were to such an extent ill-bred; there was no family culture. You may imagine that it did not dawn to me as soon as possible to write my parents, to my mom, to let her know, that I am still alive. Later she told me, that after the war ended, there was still no news from me. I wrote only two weeks (!) later. This was because we were constantly on the march and on the move. Mom already thought that I had perished, and was not alive anymore — do you realize? There was such joy in Rechitsa that the two sons – me and Yefim (Chaim) – went wounded and remained alive and still not crippled. Yefim has been shot in lungs, his hip was torn out. But his hands and legs are still there; so is his head. Obviously, I was fated to survive. And what about my other contusion, when for six days I could not speak and was lying in a field hospital? I could not hear anything. Yet I did recover. The youth! We were healthy and young. And, thank God, the contusion did not hit me as much as others. I was lucky. Simply lucky!

A year after the described events I visited Breslau (today's Wrocław – L.S.) and saw the huge brotherly cemetery of Soviet soldiers. I counted there 25 graves of Heroes of the Soviet Union! Probably they transported the remains of our fighters from the entire region. And, on the whole the bones of our poor soldiers are strewn all over Germany and Europe, so that you won't find even traces. They were buried the simplest way. Some sign was left, a piece of wood with an inscription with a chemical pencil or with paint if they had it at hand. Without any doubt very many don't know until today, where rests the dust of their relatives. Such is life, my son. It is not in vain that the old do not wish for youth to experience wars".

A commentary by Leonid Smilovitsky:

My father joined the Red Army as a volunteer; he was demanding, pestered the recruitment office. Finally, after long efforts (Leiba was then only 18 years old) the Tuymazy district recruitment office of the Bashkir ASSR met his wishes. The family found itself there after evacuation from Rechitsa (Gomel region) in August of 1941. In the railway station Kuzovatovo, my father served in a reserve regiment in March-April of 1941, waiting for the call to the front line.

In the award command my father is referred to as Russian. This was at the expense of the military clerk. In some other documents he is listed as Belarusian, in some – as a Jew. To my question about these inconsistencies father replied that they did not pay attention to this – it was important to live up to the evening. In anti-tank artillery, where he served, no one had any illusions. Losses were so enormous that, for example, the officers were raised in the rank every three months.

A document I found relatively recently in the Central Archive of the Russian Ministry of Defense in Podolsk (TsAMO) illustrates how my father fought. This is a command excerpt from August 27, 1944 by the 649th destruction anti-tank regiment of the 13th Special anti-tank Upper Dnieper Red Flag brigade of the Reserve of the Chief Command (TsAMO, f. 33, op. 717037, d. 1508).

August 27, 1944.

Decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of
the Soviet Union – to reward with the Medal "For Courage"

Lev M. Smilovitsky, driver of the 5th battery, a ranker, for having on June 26th, 1944, in the vicinity of village Kurjany of the Bielastok (today's Białystok – L.S.) region, under the adversary-'s artillery and mortar fire, in time delivered ammunition for the battery, and during the air-raid by adversary's aviation has led out the automobile from under the strikes of the aviation, thus rescuing the automobile, as well as the artillery piece.

Commander of the 649th destruction anti-tank regiment,
colonel Vvedensky

LIBERATION SEVENTY YEARS ON IN BELARUS

DAVID MARPLES

Two events of note took place in Belarus recently. The first was the June survey of the Independent Institute of Social--Economic and Political Research (IISEPS) indicating that Belarusians strongly disliked the Euromaidan and its removal of former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych from power. The second was the arrival of Vladimir Putin in Minsk to mark "Independence Day" (July 3) and the opening of the lavish new Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War.

Taken together the two symbolize the position of Belarus, which is increasingly close to Russia despite some rhetorical skirmishes. Although in theory Belarus has taken a neutral position on the clash between Russia and Ukraine, the reality is that it has largely taken Russia's side, ostensibly because that is also the position of its people, fed as they are on a diet of government propaganda and patriotic sentiment. Over 65% appraised the events in Donetsk and Luhansk in the spring of 2014 as a "popular protest against illegitimate authorities [in Kyiv]." Over 62% support the return of Crimea to Russia as reestablishing historical reality. Most Belarusians do not see Russia as a potential threat to their country either.

On the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Minsk, the Russian president arrived to take his place alongside Lukashenka for the opening of the museum, a project that is probably the closest to the heart of the Belarusian president. Lukashenka announced that he would always support the truth about the war and he cited the importance of the Brest Fortress as a common memorial of Belarus and Russia. Then [in the war] as now, Belarus and Russia "will always be together" .

It is ironic that Lukashenka made reference to distortions of the truth about the events of the war years since he has been one of their chief perpetrators. And it does not take much to unravel some of the propaganda coming forth from his office or from the state media. Let us take three topics that are central to the Lukashenka myths about the war: the resistance of the Brest Fortress, the role of the partisans, and the liberation of Minsk on July 3, 1944, the official state holiday.

The resistance of the Brest Fortress, which was the topic of a 2010 Russian-Belarusian movie, had little impact on the course of the war, the valor of the defenders notwithstanding. Its defense was led by a Tatar, P.M. Gavrilov, and such was Stalin's "gratitude" for his bravery that he spent ten years after the war in a labor camp, as did others because ultimately they had surrendered to the enemy, always a suspicious sign in the mind of the Soviet leader. Gavrilov received his Hero of the Soviet Union medal only in 1957—twelve years.

If one reads works approved by the Ministry of Education on the partisans, one will find prominently displayed the name of P.K. Ponomarenko (a Ukrainian from Krasnodar, Russia), the leader of the Communist Party of Belarus from 1938 and one of the most faithful followers of Stalin. But when the Germans approached Minsk, Ponomarenko fled to Russia abandoning his people. Thereafter he did his best to heap scorn and suspicion on the Minsk underground and local partisans. Leaders of the former were arrested as collaborators and executed. Partisan heroes who resisted from the earliest days, after the flight of Ponomarenko, struggled for recognition from Moscow and received little help when the partisans came under centralized control. Many were arrested as soon as Belarus was liberated and they faced a grim existence until the death of Stalin.

Ponomarenko later stated that the Moscow leaders regarded one of today's Belarusian partisan heroes, V.I. Korzh, as an anarchist and "it was my fault—I believed them." State--approved Belarusian authors today exaggerate the size and longevity of the partisan movement, adding the period before there was central control under Ponomarenko and Voroshilov (thus 1941-44, rather than 1942-43), and citing up to 374,000 members by the summer of 1943. In reality, their small, often bedraggled and half-starved groups were forced to live off Belarusian villages, intimidating and bullying the locals into offering them food and supplies. Society, as in any war, was badly divided. Most would have preferred to stay out of it. Some collaborated, others remained loyal to Soviet authority.

Although Minsk was liberated in July 1944, the liberation brought little recognition of its suffering and none at all for the loss of its huge Jewish population. When Stalin established hero cities, Minsk was not among their number. Nor did the city attain recognition under the so-called "thaw" period of Nikita Khrushchev. Only in 1974, after Leonid Brezhnev elevated the war to cult status did the city receive the award of Hero City—thus the celebration in July 2014 marked the 70th anniversary of liberation, but only the 40th year celebrating Minsk as a center of resistance.

One reason for the lack of recognition, despite the immense popular losses in Belarus, was Stalin's belief that Minsk and other Belarusian cities were hotbeds of traitors and collaborators. Another explanation is there was no Belarus as such during the war years. Its lands were divided and its leaders were in Moscow, thus those who remained behind, in the view of Soviet leaders, were clearly sympathetic to the invaders. In fact the peak period of benefits to Soviet Belarus occurred during the time of Nazi-Soviet cooperation, between September 1939 and June 1941, when Belarusian territories were reunited. Stalin's friendship with Hitler and the division of Poland between them for a brief period added Vilna and area, as well as a largely Jewish city, Bialystok, to the BSSR.

The expanded Belarusian state enjoyed a very brief existence, however. By October 1939, allegedly on the advice of Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, the Vilna region was ceded to Lithuania (soon to be annexed by the USSR). After the

war, Poland, now under Communist leadership of the Lublin Committee established by Stalin, regained Bialystok and its environs, now deprived of its Jews because of the Nazi Holocaust. The result was that Minsk, more than ever, became the center of Belarusian life, though it had been largely destroyed during the war.

The elimination and removal of Nazi rule is indeed worth celebrating. But the return of Stalinism to Belarus brought few rewards and considerable suffering to Belarusians. The image of a common liberation struggle is largely mythical. And the purges that preceded the war, which had seen the destruction of Belarus' national and cultural elite, continued afterward. Ponomarenko, who remained a favorite of Stalin, returned to Minsk and headed both the party and government from February 1944 to March 1947. A decade later, former partisans took over the Belarusian leadership. They were staunch communists and hardliners on Soviet foreign policy, but undoubtedly more humane leaders.

Minsk as we know it today was reconstructed as the archetypal socialist realist Stalinist city, with wide streets, multi- storied buildings, and a plethora of monuments. From the 1970s these latter have been on mainly war related themes, but Soviet-era statesmen are well represented, from Lenin to Kalinin and Dzerzhinsky. Rural Belarusians became urbanized and more Russified, largely losing their old village identity. And gradually the stories of the war evolved into illusions, fostered and abetted by the present leadership, which has now allotted roles to local heroes that belie their actual influence on events. Not only did Belarus win the war, according to official rhetoric it was also a key player in the destruction of fascism and freedom of Europe, enjoyed by millions in the EU today.

To some extent, official propaganda has succeeded, as can be seen from the recent survey of IISEPS. Belarusians support Russia and Lukashenka believe they are one people. In the long term, one hopes for a more pragmatic and impartial approach to the war years. As veterans die, and after Lukashenka's presidency, it will become harder to sustain the legends of the Great Patriotic War and friendship of peoples. Neither the Russian Empire nor the Soviet Union treated Belarus with much respect. The BSSR was a symbolic state. It had a seat in the United Nations, like Ukraine, but no real authority. All major decisions were still made in Moscow.

A few months ago, a new stamp was issued by the main post office in Minsk to mark the 70th anniversary of liberation from the Nazis. Initially it carried the inscription "70th anniversary of the Liberation of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine from German Fascist Invaders." In late March, however (after Russia's annexation of Crimea), the inscription was amended, and Ukraine was removed (www.belaruspartisan.org/politic/ 262109). Thus in one swoop, the massive contribution of Ukraine to the war—its losses were immense—was eliminated in a manner reminiscent of Stalinist times. There could hardly be a more fitting illustration of how official Belarus today manipulates history for political purposes.

SWEDES ON THE TERRITORY OF TODAY'S MAHILIOŬ REGION DURING THE GREAT NORTHERN WAR

MAX ROSENKOV

The Great Northern War (1700-1721) significantly affected Belarus, including the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region. Much has been written about the Battle of Liasnaja and to a lesser extent about other events of this period. However, Belarusian historiography usually (intentionally or not) tends to portray these events through the prism of the Russian/ Soviet point of view. Other historians view the events of the Great Northern War that took place on the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region as just a part of the research on the whole Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Therefore these analyses are not detailed enough. This article attempts to show the details of the events of that time in the Mahilioŭ region.

DEFINING GEOGRAPHIC AND TIME FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

For the convenience and interest of the readers, it seems logical to choose the modern administrative boundaries of today's Mahilioŭ region, rather than the borders of the then Voivodeships. The time frame of the research is limited to the year 1708.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Among Belarusian historians who have researched the events of the Great Northern War on the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region, one can distinguish Andrej Kotljarchuk, who in his work S*wedes in the history and culture of Belarusians*[16], in particular, highlights the period of the stationing of the Swedish army in Mahilioŭ and the Swedish disaster at Liasnaja. One can also mention a number of historians from Mahilioŭ, including Aliaksandr Ahiejeŭ, Jaraslaŭ Klimuć, Ihar Puškin[4], and Ihar Marzaliuk[18].

Among Soviet/Russian historians, one should mention Yevgeny Tarle and his work *Great Northern War and Swedish invasion of Russia* [25] which is a compulsory manual for all historians of the post-Soviet space dealing with the Great Northern War. However, one should keep in mind that Tarle's research was first and foremost focused on the Napoleonic wars; moreover, he was forced (for obvious reasons) to prepare an over-politicized work, which is often far from reality [9]. Among modern Russian historians, one can distinguish Vladimir Artamonov for his most detailed studies of the Great Northern War: first of all, *1708-2008. Mother of Poltava victory. Battle of Liasnaja* [7], as well as individual chapters in *The Battle of Poltava: the 300th anniversary of the Battle of Poltava.*[8]

Swedish historians generally consider the events of the Great Northern War on the territory of the GDL only as part of the general course of events. At most, the so-called Russian

campaign of Charles XII (1707-1709) may become the subject of separate study. However, because of the sonorous name of this campaign (it is so called because the Swedish king was originally planning to attack Moscow), Swedish historians repeat one and the same error, as if the events of the years 1707-1708 years took place on the territory of Russia![11],[19] Indeed, many interesting things can be found in the research of historians such as Carl Grimberg [12], Carl Hallendorff [13], Alf Åberg [3] and others, although none of the Swedish scholars have focused on the area of today's Mahilioŭ region as a theme of specific research.

However, the Battle of Liasnaja still attracts the attention of historians, both Swedish and Russian. As a vivid example of this, one can refer to the joint work of Swedish general Einar Lyth and Russian amateur historian Pavel Konovaltchuk *Vägen till Poltava. Slaget vid Lesnaja 1708* (2009) [15]. The authors provide a detailed analysis of the battle (using previously unknown documents which they found in Swedish archives) and depict the events that preceded the battle.

In my work, I used not only studies by Belarusian, Russian and Swedish historians, but also primary sources – diaries of the Caroleans *Leonhard Kagg, Anders Pihlström, Joachim Lyth, Robert Petre, Andreas Westerman.*

LAND OF BIG BATTLES

Three significant battles of the Great Northern War occurred on the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region: the Battle of Haloŭčyn, the Battle of Liasnaja, and the Battle of Maliacičy (in Russian historiography better known as *the Battle of the village of Dobraje*).

In spring and early summer of 1708, the army of Charles XII was moving towards the east and forcing the Russians to retreat (on June 21 (July 1) the Swedes had already reached the village of Prybar, on June 23- Zabaloccie, and on the next day they were in Maščanica - all in today's Bialyničy district) [5]. Destroying everything in its way, the Russians were able to establish a foothold on the river Vabič in Haloŭčyn. They stationed their camp on the river's high bank. The breastwork that covered this camp was filled with guns and surrounded by a ditch[20]. Crossing of the river was complicated because of its marshy shores. According to Swedish data, the Russian camp numbered 20,000 persons[5]. Interestingly, Swedish fähnrich (ensign) Anders Pihlström drew the line between Lithuania and Belarus („White Russia") as on the river Vabič [5].

However, Russian fortifications did not pose a threat to the Swedish king. On the night from 3(13) to 4(14) of July, the Caroleans were ready to cross Russia's fortifications. Undeterred by the Swedish king, and on the night of 3 (13) 4 (14), the Caroleans were ready to cross the river Vabič[8] (at Vysokaje) [5]. At 2 AM, the king and his guard, as well as the Dalarna regiment forded the river and immediately attacked the left flank of the Russian army. In two hours[5] (according to other sources in four hours[8]) that flank was already under Swedish control. The Swedes did not need to attack the right flank because the Russian troops started running away towards the Dnieper. According to various estimates, Russian casualties in the Battle of Haloŭčyn ranged from 350 [8] to 4,000 [20] dead. A Swedish officer Leonhard Kagg who took part in the battle provides the following information: 1,028 people were killed, while there was also „the crowd of prisoners, 14 guns and a large amount of ammunition".[17] The Swedes lost from 238 [17] to 255 [8] people killed and 1,219 wounded.[8] On July 5th, the Swedes buried their dead in Vysokaje (at Haloŭčyn) [5]. In honor of his victory at Haloŭčyn Charles XII ordered the minting of a number of commemorative medals.[8] As for the town, it had already been destroyed by the arrival of the Swedes, and there remained only a few people.[14]

After Haloŭčyn, the army of Charles XII spent almost a month in Mahilioŭ, and then it moved further east. On August 20, (30) Swedes reached Čerykaŭ and on the following day turned north. On August 28, they reached Maliacičy (now Kryčaŭ district) and stopped there.[5] On August 31 (September 10), the troops of the Russian General Mikhail Golitsyn attacked the corps of General Carl Gustav Roos: the Swedish army lost 261 people, including Colonel Nils Rosenstierna [8]. However, Charles XII arrived together with his generals and three dragoon regiments, and the Russians were bogged down in a swamp and forced to retreat.[8] The losses of the Russian army totaled 375 men killed and 1,191 wounded. [8] On September 3 (14), the Swedes reached Bykavičy (near Mscislaŭ) and on September 9 again faced the Russian army near Rajeŭka [8] – however, this village of the former Mscislaŭ Voivodeship is located beyond the geographic limits of this text. On September 14 (24), the Swedish king ordered his army to turn towards Siveria, and thus, the Swedes again passed through today's Mahilioŭ region. On September 19, they were in Kryčaŭ and Anders Pihlström wrote in his diary that the Sož river marks here the border between Belarus and Siveria[5]. On September 23, the Swedes reached Krasavičy (today's Klimavičy district), and then walked through the forest until they came on September 29 (October 9) to Nivnoye (now Surazh district of the Russia's Bryansk region, just a few kilometers from the border with Belarus) [14].

On the same day another battle took place in the Prapojsk (today's Slaŭharad) area – the Battle of Liasnaja. It was perhaps the best known battle of all previously mentioned in this text. This battle was later described by Russian czar Peter I as „the mother of the Battle of Poltava" [25].

In summer of 1708, the Swedish army led by General Adam Ludwig Lewenhaupt moved from Riga eastward in order to join with the main army led by Charles XII. Lewenhaupt's army numbered 11,375 [16] to 13,000 soldiers and 1,300 officers [15]. These figures do not include 7,100 civilians[17]: servants, coachmen, cooks, incl. women [15]. However, most importantly, Lewenhaupt had a wagon train with weapons, ammunition and food, which consisted of 7,000-8,000 wagons.

On September 17 (27) while in Škloŭ (where he arrived from Talačyn), Lewenhaupt received a letter from Charles XII, in which the king wrote that he had turned towards Siveria (the king mistakenly thought that the General had alrea-

dy crossed the Dnieper and was in safety) [12]. The joining of their armies was already planned in Ukraine. However, Lewenhaupt crossed the Dnieper from September 21 to 23 and only after the king's order. To achieve this goal, the Swedes (regiment of Major General Berndt Otto Stackelberg, Sr.) built a pontoon bridge.[26] The works were directly supervised by the fortification captain Mårten Kammecker [15]. On September 26 (October 6), Lewenhaupt was already in Bielica (now Čerykaŭ district) with the wagon train, and the next morning Russian cavalry attacked the Swedes [26]. Lewenhaupt managed to repel the attack, but it took much time. In fact, the king ordered the General to avoid any collision with the enemy.[12] Yet in just three days they had to take the fight by the village of Liasnaja near Prapojsk.

In this text I will not describe and analyze the entire battle as this topic deserves a separate article. It is more useful to focus on a number of issues. First, was the result of the battle an undisputed victory of the Russian army, as it is still described, in particular, in Belarus? In fact, this depends on what is emphasized. If we consider that part of the Swedes had run at night, strayed from the convoy and never reached Siveria, and that Lewenhaupt was forced to sink the wagon train in the swamp [10], it was then certainly a victory for the Russians. But if we switch to "the language of numbers," we get the following: out of the 8,300 Swedes who were directly involved in the battle (another 4,000 did not take part in it), no more than 1,000 were killed and about 5,000 - 6,000 were either wounded or just disappeared[26]; among them at least 1,100 persons managed to return to Riga and Mitau (today's Jelgava) [15]. In addition, 385 people were captured [2]. According to the official data, Russians lost 1,111 men killed and 2,856 wounded.[8] However, for example, Pavel Konovaltchuk and Einar Lyth find this information doubtful: they prove that these numbers were deliberately lessened for propaganda purposes. These numbers do not include losses (killed and/or wounded) from Bauer (Baur)'s regiment, Kalmyk regiment, Cossacks and Rostov dragoons [15]. Moreover, immediately after the battle about 500 Swedish riders, including officers and generals Lewenhaupt and Stackelberg, made a tour of the battlefield to determine whether it was still possible to save any of the wounded, as well as to demonstrate to the enemy that these were Swedes who were masters of the situation. [15] At night the Swedes decided to retreat, to a certain extent destroying Russian army plans to impose the main battle. So what happened after the battle were its consequences. The battle itself could be called rather "a draw game," and by no means "a bitter defeat of Lewenhaupt", as it was portrayed during the Soviet era.[25]

Second, unfortunately, a legend that Belarusians helped the Russians in the fight „against the common enemy" is still popular in Belarus[28]. Below I will focus on the real attitude of Belarusians towards Swedes. Now I emphasize only one fact: there were 50 "Poles" (as all the inhabitants of the *Rzeczpospolita* were called; perhaps of this fifty soldiers some were ethnic Belarusians) among the participants of the Battle of Liasnaja on the Swedish side[22].

MYTH ABOUT STRUGGLE OF THE BELARUSIAN PEOPLE AGAINST SWEDISH INVADERS

Any war brings a lot of suffering to any nation, and the Great Northern War was no exception with regard to the Belarusian people. However, it is a mistake to think that the Belarusians perceived Swedes only as enemies and Russians as liberators (especially as it was only half a century after the Thirteen Years' War with Muscovy!). It is worth recalling that there was a civil war in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at that time. A part of the gentry, including families of Višniaviecki/Wiśniowiecki, Ahinski/Ogiński and Radzivil/Radziwiłł, supported King Augustus II and, accordingly, Peter I, i.e those who in 1700 started a war against Sweden (this formulation seems to be correct since an eighteen-year king Charles XII did not even plan to start a war!) Another part of the nobles, led by Sapieha, dreamed of independence from Poland and therefore supported the Swedes [16]. In October 1703, Kazimier Jan P. Sapieha transferred all his estates to the Swedish protectorate and received Swedish citizenship. [16] The family of Sapieha possessed a number of cities, including Bychaŭ [16] and Škloŭ [22]. Swedes were supported by the townspeople and merchants of the Belarusian Dzvina and Dnieper regions [16]. For example, the citizens of Mahilioŭ who saw a lot of suffering from the Russians, greeted Swedes and their king with bread and salt when they solemnly entered the city through the Vilna gate on July 8 (July 9 according to the Swedish calender and July 19 according to the Gregorian one), 1708; the mayor of Mahilioŭ presented the monarch a symbolic key to the city on a red decorated towel. [24]

As evidence of the struggle of the Belarusian people against the Swedes, Russian czar Peter I is often quoted: "because men in the forests exceedingly beat [them]."[25] Yet, in fact, these "men" consisted mainly of Russian troops, Ukrainian Cossacks of a pro-Russian Hetman Skoropadskyi and predatory gangs of Mahilioŭ gentry and peasants [16] (at least for the latter it did not matter whom to rob – Swedes or Russians). Indeed, in some cases Belarusians could kill Swedish soldiers (for example, peasants who defended their property). However, portraying these events as "a struggle" of the Belarusian people against the Swedes is an exaggeration! There are a number of contrary incidents in which the people of the GDL (and not only ethnic Belarusians) helped the Swedes. A nobleman Ryhor Žarkiajevič conducted the army of Charles XII from his native village of Padzierni to Kryčaŭ [1]. The dragoon captain Bernhard Virgin, who soon after the Battle of Liasnaja tried to get from Prapojsk to Siveria, was shown by a Jew where to better wade the river Sož[15]. The residents of Belarus also helped wounded Swedes [15]. The Swedish allies – Belarusians of Sapieha troops – killed not Swedes but Russians. For example, when Russian troops were returning from Liasnaja to Smolensk, about 200 (mostly wounded) people from the Semenov regiment were killed [15].

There are also legends which are interpreted as proof of the very "struggle of Belarusians against Swedish invaders." The plot of one of these legends took place in the village of Hajšyn near Prapojsk soon after the Battle of Liasnaja:

"...Retreating Swedes crossed the river Sož in the vicinity of the village of Hajšyn. The story was the following. On a quiet autumn morning, someone in the village vigorously exclaimed: "The Swedes are coming!" Indeed, a squad of the enemy army was passing through the village. It was impossible to watch them without laughing. These strangers were tattered and mired in the marsh mud, many of them were unarmed. It was not a menacing army, but a crowd trembling with fear, hunger and cold. One of these soldiers with a mad face dropped into one of the farmhouses with an unknown intention. The hostess was first frightened but soon quickly pulled herself together. While he was staring at her with his widening wild eyes and muttering something in his language, she grabbed a pot with boiling water from the oven, shouted: "Get lost, evil", and poured the boiling water on the Swede. He yelled and rushed away. The next day Russian cavalry tracking the Swedes arrived in the village. In the vicinity of Hajšyn they did not find any stranger ..."[6]

Now, let's analyze this legend. As we have seen, the term "enemy army" does not correspond to reality. Most likely, it was added to the legend much later. "Strangers" is another example, because it was neither Litvins, nor even Poles. Moreover, when a Swedish soldier entered one of the huts, the hostess "poured boiling water on the Swede." However, what was this woman supposed to do if she was scared of a tattered and mired in the marsh mud stranger with a mad face? Or maybe she should have rushed to give him a kiss? After a brief shock she just instinctively started to defend herself and did what immediately came to her mind. But did she have an objective ground to chase this stranger? In fact, no! Maybe, the language barrier matters here, as was clearly stated that the Swede was "muttering something in his language". It means that he was trying to explain something. Most likely, he asked for help (to eat, drink, and, most importantly, escape from persecution, as was "staring at her with his widening wild eyes" – most likely, he knew that the Russians were chasing the Swedes and was very scared). If he had "known intentions," he would have immediately moved to action, and not "muttered", as it was still not an American horror film, where the offender could for half an hour explain to the victim how and what he will do with her! So, if he sought help from the Belarusians, he knew that he might find it. [23] The legend does not tell us what this woman did then: maybe she regretted her actions, caught up the poor man and helped him escape from the Russians? Maybe that was why the Russian troops "did not find any stranger in the vicinity of Hajšyn," as the Swedes could have been hidden by the locals? Indeed, this is just a guess, but it proves that it in neither case is it possible to consider this legend as indisputable proof of "Belarusian people's struggle against Swedish invaders."

TERRITORY OF TODAY'S MAHILIOŬ REGION IN THE DIARIES OF CAROLEANS

Those Caroleans who left their diaries were educated people. Some of them were interested in everything they saw: the culture and customs of other nations, the foreign cities and villages. Many of them made notes every day describing which way they were going and what settlements they were passing (in fact, Swedes perceived local toponyms mainly by ear, so it is quite difficult to recognize some of the names). They were interested on what rivers the cities and towns which they had to visit were located: Haloŭčyn – "on a small creek Vabič" [5], Kryčaŭ – on the Sož[14], and Mahilioŭ – "on the Dnieper (*Nipern*), or Borysthenes" [5]. They suggest that „the Jewish city of Škloŭ"[14] is "a relatively large one which lies on the Dnieper and belongs to the Sapieha family"[22]. According to them, Mahilioŭ is ".. a well-built city which has a rich and solid appearance. It possesses an earthen rampart which surrounds the entire city of Mahilioŭ, and even a suburb on this side of the river is also protected by the rampart."[16]. The memoirs of the Swedes also contain quite curious references that indirectly mention settlements of today's Mahilioŭ region. For instance, Leonhard Kagg, a 26-year-old Lieutenant from the Östgöta cavalry regiment, describes an incident that occurred on September 25 (October 5), 1708:

*„... On this very day, one rider from the life guards regiment was killed by a tree in the woods near Chocimsk (*Hotzemetz*)"*[17]

SWEDISH TOPONYMS IN THE MAHILIOŬ REGION

In his book S*wedes in the history and culture of Belarusians* Andrej Kotljarchuk raises, among other things, the interesting issue of Swedish place names in Belarus. He provides many examples of Mahilioŭ region, such as the road from Uchalody to Haloŭčyn known as "Royal dam" (it is believed that it was built in 1708 by the Royal Guard of Charles XII), "Charles trench" in Horki, and "Charles valley" near Mahilioŭ [16] (the latter is located between the city and the Bujničy monastery and was where the Swedish army was stationed in July 1708) [4]. Kotljarchuk also mentions numerous Belarusian villages called Šviedy, Šviady, etc. in which the descendants of those Swedes live [16]. To this type of toponyms I would also add those called Karaliny, Karalino, etc. However, all of these villages are located outside today's Mahilioŭ region.

As for the Mahilioŭ region and precisely the Prapojsk district, an interesting example seems to be the name of a village Sviensk. It is known that the word "Svensk" is translated from the Swedish language as "Swedish" and "Swede." With this regard one should consider two factors. First, Sviensk is situated just a few kilometers from the famous Liasnaja. Second, as we have seen, some Caroleans remained in Belarus, and even founded a number of villages. Thus, it would be logical to assume that Sviensk was founded by the Swedes. Sviensk was first mentioned only in 1870 [27], and this can be explained by the fact that since its foundation (not before October 1708) it was small settlements (farm, hamlet, or small village) which did not have any value. So, perhaps, descendants of Swedes still live in Sviensk.

CONCLUSION

The study of Swedish historiography and especially primary sources such as diaries of Caroleans provides scholars with an opportunity to significantly enrich their knowledge about the Great Northern War in Belarus, including the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region. Considering the civil war in the GDL, as well as the fact of the deliberate distortion of history during the Soviet period, now we have the opportunity to develop a more objective approach to the study of the period of the Great Northern war and its aftermath for Belarus.

Now we can differently evaluate the results of the Battle of Liasnaja and remember other battles of this war – the Battle of Haloŭčyn and the Battle of Maliacičy. We also see that there has never been a massive all-embracing struggle of the Belarusian people against the Swedes. On the contrary, part of the Belarusian population helped the Swedes. Now we know that Caroleans documented a lot of interesting information in their diaries, including about the territory of today's Mahilioŭ region. Swedes have left their mark in the toponyms of the Mahilioŭ region..

However, the issues of the Swedish campaign in the Mahilioŭ region and in Belarus in general during the Great Northern War require much more research, while further acquaintance with Swedish sources can reveal many more interesting details.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] «1708 г. сентября 20. Допросные речи шляхтича Г.Жеркеевича о движении шведской армии на Украину», in *Полтавская битва 1709 года. Документы и материалы*. Отв.ред. Е.Е. Рычаловский, Москва, РОССПЭН, 2011, с.116.

[2] «1708 г. сентября, [не ранее 28]. Роспись пленных, захваченных в сражении при Лесной, по чинам», in *Полтавская битва 1709 года. Документы и материалы*. Отв.ред. Е.Е. Рычаловский, Москва, РОССПЭН, 2011, с.123

[3] ÅBERG, A., *Karolinerna och Österlandet,* Stockholm, Natur och Kultur, 1967, 116 s.

[4] AGEEV, A., KLIMUT, Y., PUSHKIN, I. = АГЕЕВ, А., КЛИМУТЬ, Я., ПУШКИН, И., *Перекрёстки Могилёвской истории,* Минск, Туринфо, 2004, 216 с.

[5] «Anders Pihlströms dagbok», in *Historiska handlingar, del. 18 n:o 4*, Stockholm 1903.

[6] «Aniekdatyčnaja...» = «Анекдатычная гісторыя аб тым, як адна кабета ратавалася ад чорта кіпенем», in *Памяць: Гісторыка-дакументальная хроніка Слаўгарадскага раёна*, Мінск, БелТа, 1999, с.48.

[7] ARTAMONOV, V. = АРТАМОНОВ, В., *1708-2008. Мать Полтавской победы. Битва при Лесной*, Общество памяти игумении Таисии, Санкт-Петербург, 2008, 210 с.

[8] ARTAMONOV, V. = АРТАМОНОВ, В., *Полтавское сражение: к 300-летию Полтавской победы*, Москва, МППА БИМПА, 2009, 686 с.

[9] DUNAEVSKIY, V.A., CHAPKEVICH, E.I. = ДУНАЕВСКИЙ, В.А., ЧАПКЕВИЧ, Е.И., «Евгений Викторович Тарле: человек в тисках беззакония», in *Трагические судьбы: репрессированые учёные Академии Наук СССР*, Москва, Наука, 1995, с.122.

[10] ENGLUND, P., *Poltava : berättelsen om en armés undergång*, Stockholm, Atlantis, 1988, 275 s.

[11] FROM, P., *Katastrofen vid Poltava : Karl XII:s ryska fälttåg 1707-1709*, Lund, Historiska Media, 2007.

[12] GRIMBERG, C., *Svenska folkets underbara öden, vol. V : 1700-1721*, Stockholm, Norstedts, 1926, 638 s.

[13] HALLENDORFF, G., «Karl XII:s och Lewenhaupts operationer år 1708», in *Uppsala universitets Årsskrift*, Uppsala, 1902, s. 1-142.

[14] *Joachim Mathiae Lyths dagbok*, Stockholm, Bokförlaget Rediviva, 1986, 119 s.

[15] KONOVALTCHUK, P., LYTH, E., *Vägen till Poltava. Slaget vid Lesnaja 1708*, Svenskt militärhistoriskt biblioteks förlag, 2009, 264 s.

[16] KOTLJARCHUK, A. = КОТЛЯРЧУК, А., *Швэды ў гісторыі й культуры беларусаў*, Менск, Энцыклапедыкс, 2002, 296 с.

[17] «Leonhard Kaggs dagbok», in *Historiska handlingar, del. 24*, Stockholm, 1912, 331 s.

[18] MARZALIUK, I. = МАРЗАЛЮК, І., *Магілёў у XII-XVIII стагоддзях*, Мінск, Веды, 1998, 260 с.

[19] PERLESTAM, M., «Den karolinske soldatens boende under det stora nordiska kriget, åren 1702-1709», in *Karolinska Förbundets Årsbok 2013*, Edita Västra Aros, Västerås, november 2013, s.123-144

[20] PUFENDORFF, S. (Mr. Le Baron de), *Histoire de Suède, avant et depuis la fondation de la monarchie*, Tome troisième, Amsterdam, Zacharie Chatelain, 1732.

[21] QUENNERSTEDT, A. (utg.), *Karolinska krigares dagböcker*, Lund, Berlingska boktryckeriet, 1901-18. 8:o

[22] *Robert Petres och C.M.Posses dagböcker 1702-1709,* Stockholm, P.A.Norstedts & Söners Förlag, 1921, 333 s.

[23] ROSENKOV, M., *La Grande guerre du Nord (1700-1721) et le destin des Suédois en Biélorussie et en Russie*. Thèse de Doctorat, Université de Strasbourg, 2013, 392 p.

[24] «Självbiografiska anteckningar av bataljonspastorn vid gardet mag. Andreas Westerman (1672 --) 1705 – 1722 », in *Karolinska dagböcker*, Stockholm, Natur och Kultur, 1958, s.143-182

[25] TARLE, E. = ТАРЛЕ, Е., *Северная война и шведское нашествие на Россию*, Москва, 1958

[26] UDDGREN, H.E., *Karolinen Adam Ludvig Lewenhaupt,* Uddevala, Barneviks Tryckeri, 1950, 214 s.

INTERNET-RESOURCES:

[27] *Agrogorodok… = Агрогородок Свенск на сайте Славгородского районного исполнительного комитета:* http://slavgorod.mogilev-region.by/ru/agrogorodki/agrogorodok_Svensk.

[28] IVANOVA, I. = ІВАНОВА, І., *Мірная Лясная: Маці Палтаўскай перамогі — 300 гадоў*. http://news.21.by/2008/10/07/157384.html.

BELARUS ABROAD

LICÍNIA SIMÃO: BELARUSIAN STUDIES AS SUCH DO NOT EXIST IN PORTUGAL

In 2013 Belarusian Review launched a project which depicts the contemporary state of Belarusian studies abroad. So far it has covered four countries – France, Latvia (vol. 25, issue 4), Norway and Sweden (vol. 26, issue 1). In this issue Belarusian Review goes southwards and asks LICÍNIA SIMÃO, *assistant professor at the School of Economics, University of Coimbra, about Belarus-related research in Portugal.*

Belarusian Review: *How could you evaluate the contemporary situation with regard to Belarusian studies in Portugal?*

Licínia Simão: Belarusian studies as such do not exist currently in Portugal. The academic literature dealing with Belarusian topics is framed either on Communist studies or post--Soviet literature. Within the field of International Relations and Political Science, which is the area I know best, Belarus has remained of limited interest to Portuguese authors, for a number of reasons, which I refer to in more detail below. Under the Communist experience, Belarus was regarded by most authors as just another Soviet Republic, offset by Russia's centrality. During the post-Soviet transition period, interest in Belarus was offset by the democratic and western turn of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and their integration into the EU and NATO. From a Portuguese perspective, these represented much more interesting processes, than Belarus' stagnation under President Lukashenka. A renewed interest in Belarus can be seen in the framework of the studies dealing with the Eastern Partnership of the European Union. This regional approach has the advantage of keeping Belarus under the radar of Portuguese scholars, along with countries like Ukraine or Moldova, but it nevertheless obscures the particularities of the country's political and socio-economic situation. A further note to migration studies in Portugal, which, due to a large influx of Eastern migrants, especially from Ukraine, have contributed to focus our attention also on Belarus in this framework. Overall, I would say that Belarusian studies will most likely remain an underdeveloped area of Portuguese academia, but that the regional focus on the Eastern neighbourhood of the EU and the increased connection between Portugal and Eastern European countries has provided and will continue to provide important opportunities for the development of studies on Belarus.

BR: *What are the main academic institutions and scholars who deal with Belarus-related issues in Portugal and what are the main topics of their research?*

LS: As I mentioned above, in the IR field some interesting studies on the post-Soviet area have been developed. At the University of Coimbra, Professor Maria Raquel Freire's work on post-Soviet Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States has been a source of inspiration to other scholars, including young researchers such as Vanda Amaro Dias, who is currently doing her PhD on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine's relations with the EU, focusing on security issues. At the University of Minho, Alena Vysotskaya Guedes – a Belarus-born scholar – has also contributed intensively to the research agenda on the post-Soviet space and I have co-authored with her two comparative pieces, focusing on Belarus and Georgia .[1]

BR: *Why Belarusian issues do not draw much attention of the Portuguese academia?*

LS: I have also hinted at this above. Since the focus in Portuguese academia has been on the Communist, or post-Soviet context, other states rather than Belarus have been perceived as more relevant. These include Russia, naturally, but also Ukraine, namely due to issues of size, political relevance, and migration factors (Ukrainians became a significant migrant community in Portugal over the last 15 years). Poland, for example, has been studied as a case of successful transition to democracy and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures where Portugal is also a member. Belarus fails to qualify in any of these attributes and thus remains outside of Portuguese attention. I should also refer that area studies in Portugal continue to display a post-colonial bias, with a clear preference for Africa and South America, with all remaining areas clearly underdeveloped. European studies and European security and regional policies have gradually been developed, requiring a better understanding of the dynamics taking place to the east. Concluding, physical distance, the lack of a tradition of studies on Belarus and of a visible Belarusian diaspora in Portugal, the relative higher importance for Portuguese foreign policy of countries like Russia or Ukraine, and the lack of common political experiences between Portugal and Belarus all contribute to this gap in Portuguese academia.

Interview conducted by Kiryl Kascian

[1] Vysotskaya G. Vieira, Alena and Licinia Simão (2009) Que papel para a NATO? Visões políticas da Georgia e Bielorrússia no contexto das relações entre o Ocidente e a Rússia, *IEEI Lumiar Brief* No. 10. Vysotskaya G. Vieira, Alena and Licinia Simão (2008) "The ENP viewed from Belarus and Georgia" , *CFSP Forum*, Vol. 6, Iss. 6

QUOTES

Every Jewish town, and there were many of them in Belarus before the war, had one to two synagogues. Today these buildings could be restored and used as museums, exhibition halls, and cultural centers.

Barys Kviatkouski (Hrodna Jewish religious community), August 28, 2014, BelTA

FORUM

THE NATION-BUILDING IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE UNDER RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

PIOTRA MURZIONAK

Disintegration of the USSR, two Russian-Chechen wars and the Russian-Georgian war, the fall of international prestige, strengthening of the independence of the post-Soviet republics and, as a consequence, a significant loss of Russian influence in these countries have led Russian leadership to the demonstration of force, which it has decided to apply to their nearest neighbors, the Ukrainians. This has left former socialist countries in Europe, subject to Russia, which now acts as a policeman in the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to warn "its area of interests".

It would seem that the Second World War ended seventy years ago and we lived as if in a period of peace. However, remember how many attempts have been made for freedom in the countries that were under Soviet occupation: German Democratic Republic (1953), Hungary (1956), Poland (1956), Czechoslovakia (1967) – all attempts were roughly suppressed. For the above-mentioned countries the situation changed dramatically today. However, the imperial attack did not stop in the territory of the former Soviet Union now: the declaration of independence of Chechnya in 1991 resulted in two bloody Russian-Chechen wars (1994-1996, 1999-2009) and in the next conquest of Chechnya; only intervention by Western countries stopped the seizure of Georgia (2008). Now it is Ukraine (2014).

As a result of hybrid, information and diplomatic war, the annexation of the Crimea occurred and a separatism in east--southern Ukraine is supported by Russia. As a motive and a tool of aggression in Ukraine, along with military means, the Russian language is used. However, Russia seized the Crimea with ‚polite little green men' and St. George ribbons long before the decision of the Federation Council (now that decision due to Western pressure temporarily cancelled), which allowed to Russian leadership to begin a war. Aggression spread to other parts of Ukraine and again, the presence of Russian forces (military, special) and weapons in the ranks of terrorists is refused by Russia, as it was done in the Crimea absorption. The tragedy with MH17 flight of Malaysian airlines resulted in 320 casualties only evidenced the support of terrorists by Russia.

The original purpose of aggression has been to subjugate Ukraine and Ukrainian people. Without Ukraine, Russia's power within unions (Customs Union, CU; Eurasian Economic Union, EEU), or outside of those unions, is lost substantially. As for Belarus, it is more and more enclosed in the arms of Russia, both economically and militarily (Union State, CU, EEU, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, Russian troops on the territory of Belarus and their participation in military parades). The Belarusian government is trying to get economic preferences and nuclear umbrella from Russia ‚to protect' itself from the always hostile West in exchange for loyalty and the prospect of inclusion of Belarus into the structure of the Russian Federation; the latter is initiated on both sides and for different reasons (remember the attempts of the Belarusian leader to take "Moscow throne" and Putin's statement in 2005 on the entry of Belarus into Russia with six provinces).

Obviously, another national-democratic revolution in Ukraine did not enter into the plans of Russia. This revolution was started when the agreement about association with the European Union by Yanukovich' government in November 2013 (under pressure from Russia) was not approved. To save the situation it concocted a false legend; at first about the threat to the citizens of Russia in the Crimea, and then, about the threat to the entire Russian-speaking population in Ukrainian state. Cynicism and lies that accompany this shameful war is impressive. Using the ‚Russian language problem' to protect Russian speakers in Ukraine does not fit the facts. As shown in a recent article (O. Gava, 2014) historically and ethnically eastern and southern regions of Ukraine can't refer to ‚Novorossiya' or Russia. Russian shares in Luhansk, Donetsk and Odessa regions, for example, is only 39%, 38% and 21%, respectively, while the Ukrainians – 58%, 57%, and 63%. Thus, more than half population of these regions are the Ukrainians and obviously never want to unite with Russia, like most Ukrainian citizens of Russian origin who do not want to be in the ranks of the ‚fifth column'. Such a merger do not want Russian speakers in Latvia and Estonia, at least on their part such serious statements were not done. Referenda held in Luhansk and Donetsk regions just look ridiculous for normal people, but not for ‚green chauvinistic men.'

Russia using the Russian language and the myth of the trinity of three Slavic peoples ambitiously takes the right to play the role of elder sister in the relations between three countries, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. But in fact, this ambition is arisen only from the imperial interests to subordinate the Belarusian and Ukrainian people. Russia is the least Slavic country of three countries (Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine) because of the most assimilation with many tribes and nations. Nevertheless, it takes an obligation to protect Russian world in Ukraine and abroad. Analysis of the dynamics of growth of Belarusians and Ukrainians in the last five centuries on the modern territories shows that it is far behind compared to the growth of Russians, which can be interpreted via direct transition of people of other nationalities, peoples and tribes to Russians. So, if the ratio of the Eastern Slavs in Muscovy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) in the late 15th century at most could be 1.3 to 1, that the proportion of Russians to Belarusians and Ukrainians, according to the Census of Russia Empire in 1897 was already 2:1, and according to the Census of the USSR (1989) - 3.2:1 (P. Murzionak, 2014). We can say that the number of Slavs-Great-Russians-Russians by ethnic origin overstated at least 2-2.5 times. Some researchers believed that the Russians are not even the Slavs (Paszkiewicz, 1970).

The basis of modern open conflict between Russia and Ukraine, or on a larger scale between East and West, is the difference in the historical, cultural and mental values between the two civilizations formed by the eastern Slavs, East Slavic or Belarusian-Ukrainian and Eurasian (P. Murzionak, 2013). In ethno-national demarcation of the eastern Slavs, which began in the days of Kievan Rus', a differentiation of East Slavic languages played a significant role. Demarcation of the eastern Slavs contributed to a number of other factors, such as migration and resettlement, natural conditions, assimilation of Slavs with local tribes, and the disintegration of Kievan Rus' caused by internecine wars between autonomous principalities. But the main reason for the disengagement of these civilizations was the arrival of the Mongol-Tatars in the land of the North-Eastern Rus' and the emergence of the GDL as the unifier of East Slavic lands. GDL was a counterweight to the Golden Horde. It stopped the movement of the Mongols further to the west. Later, the GDL stopped the "western" movement of the Eurasian civilization, formed as a result of union of Muscovy with the remnants of the Golden Horde and later with lots of conquered lands and peoples to the east, north and south of Moscow. GDL saved Belarusians and Ukrainians from assimilation with the Turkic peoples. Among other factors that underline geographical, historical and civilizational boundaries between two civilizations, we should note the difference in the duration of existence, changes in the territory occupied, different languages, the ratio of the Slavs (Bulgarians, Belarusians, Great Russians, Poles, Ukrainians) to representatives of other ethnic groups, the ratio of the Christian to Muslim believers, signs of belonging to Western civilization.

Thus, the history of those three countries, as well as differences in the ethnic composition of the residents who live in them, might explain the nature of aggression Russia to Belarus and Ukraine.

Given the considerable spread of daily use of the Russian language in Ukraine and Belarus, as well as external linguistic, cultural, economic and military pressure by Russia, nation-building in these east-Slavic countries is much more complicated. In parallel with the traditional territorial expansion of Russia, Russian language plays a significant role in capturing and subordinating peoples and thwarts any attempts to build small nations. Some authors emphasized that the impact of language in the assimilation of local Finno-Ugric tribes exerted in the earliest stages of settlement Slavs in Muscovy and North-Eastern Rus'. Nobody remembers already tribes such as Muroma, Meshchera, Merya; some of them merged with the Eastern Slavs back in 11-12 century and formed the basis of the Russian ethnos. Ultimately, the knowledge of Russian language is largely associated, especially in the last two centuries, with national self-determination by the formula: knowledge and usage of Russian language = Russian by nationality. It is evident nowadays that as a result of assimilation the entire nations gradually disappear, mainly Finno-Ugric nations on the land where Muscovy began to grow (at the same time, it should be noted a significant increase of the North Caucasus nations). Thus, according to the latest census in 1989, 2002 and 2010 compared to the pre-war period (Census 1926 and Census 1939) the number of Mordvins, Karelians, Vepsians, Izhorians decreased several times and no natural population growth of Chuvash, Komi, and Udmurts is observed. No doubt Russification played a role here. If there will be no major changes in national self-identification, Belarusians and Ukrainians await the same fate. Nobody knows how long this process takes, possibly decades or centuries.

The existence of two civilizations – Eastern Slavic and Eurasian – is an objective reality which explains the nature and the inevitability of today's conflict. Despite the very disturbing and ambiguous situation in Ukraine, in a historical perspective the development of the two nations, Belarusian and Ukrainian, should be considered optimistic. There are two aspects of that optimism, external and internal. The external aspect is due to the continuation of the struggle between the values of East and West, on the borderline of it both Belarusian and Ukrainian states are. At the same time, we must keep in mind that Russian aggression could not be only ended by the seizure of the Crimea and or even the eastern regions of Ukraine. Bulgarians, Romanians, Latvians, Estonians are worried and threatened, those people who know the Gulags and all the delights of slavery. Namely these closer to Russia countries are trumpeting to the world about the threat to freedom and democracy, in contrast to Western countries, which are just beginning to slowly understand what is happening and what threatens them. One might think that if the Russian Federation/Russian Empire will continue to use ‚language' approach, the post-Soviet and non-Soviet neighboring countries cannot protect themselves against such aggression and they can only hope for support of more powerful and influential forces in the world. This does not mean that Ukraine or Belarus should immediately join NATO. Allies need to create conditions for the democratic development of these and other countries. It seems such an understanding is beginning to emerge in the West.

Inner optimism is determined by the willingness of societies in Belarus and Ukraine to change. As for the Ukrainian society, the two revolutions in the last decade have proven its willingness to move forward. It should be noted that the language in an internal conflict in Ukraine was one of the central problems in the past 20 years and it remains. Obviously, without external influence Ukrainians, through dialogues, roundtables, would find a solution as to the language or other issues. But Russia, with its yardstick of exclusivity in their understanding of the world imposes its rules of slavery life under ‚polite mask of green men' as good intentions, without asking the owners of the house, where they rudely broke. As for the Belarusian society, it looks that it is not enough prepared at all. Nevertheless, the theoretical probability of building a national state exists in Belarus, and its implementation will largely depend on the situation in Ukraine.

The statehood of the titular nation language is one of the key factors in determining the independent and free development of both Belarus and Ukraine. There is no nation if there is no native language. Belarus leader is glad vain that almost all Belarusians speak Russian and therefore it should not be afraid of the Russian aggression, as it happens with regard to Ukraine. But namely Russian language was one of the motives for aggression in Ukraine. Obviously, the danger to the East

Slavic civilization and for the Belarusian and Ukrainian nations now comes from the east and not from the west. About 1.4 million from 2.9 million Belarusians were killed only in the wars with Muscovy (1654-1657), in 30-40-ies of the last century the Belarusian elite was much destroyed. Whether is it possible to override those and other losses in the past by a grief and loss of the last war, which are only remembered in Belarus?

The plans of Lukashenka are not aimed at nation-building. It was not a surprise to observe it in his recent interview conducted by Kseniya Sobchak (May 2014). Lukashenka still does not see the national idea from beneath of "the Monomakh's Cap (once already stolen)". Meanwhile, Belarus, by signing the agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union, climbs into the mouth of the dragon, which needs new victims. Military aggression of Russia against Ukraine showed its ‚Eurasian face' which is based on the nature of this civilization; the Helsinki Final Act (1975) or the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurance (1994) mean nothing. Obviously, this aggression permanently put an end to the formation of ‚Slavic' unions. Under normal conditions, ‚Slavonic Bazaars' are needed for the development of friendship between peoples, but if they become tools in politics, then they eventually turn into the scene to search for enemies or supporters, as it happens at the Eurovision contests, or as it was during the Cold War.

Whatever support from the West, Belarus and Ukraine should be together and work together to build full, free and democratic nations. Given the proximity of historical fate of the two countries and common civilizational space, the role of Belarus in protecting the interests of Ukraine could be and should be much greater. However, the Belarusian leadership took a more than neutral position as judged by voting against the UN resolution condemning the aggression of Russia against Ukraine; Belarus recognized *de facto* the annexation of the Crimea as well. It is therefore very important to develop in the future all possible contacts between non-governmental Belarusian forces (media, opposition organizations) and Ukrainian governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Support of Ukraine to Belarus after the victory of the revolution will be extremely important. Historical analysis shows that the situation will improve for both countries as it is a gradual and inevitable process.

BECOME AN AUTHOR

We are looking forward to receive contributions from new authors, particularly from young scholars and analysts dealing with issues related to Belarus. If you would like to submit your text to Belarusian Review please, email it to the address: thepointjournal@gmail.com or belarusianreview@hotmail.com. All the materials must be sent in a text format (.doc, .docx, .rtf). bear author's name and should not exceed 7,000 words. Please note that Belarusian Review is an entirely non-commercial project operating on a voluntary basis.

BELARUSIAN REVIEW (ISSN 1064-7716)
Published by Belarusan-American Association, Inc.
a fraternal non-profit association

U.S.A. : BELARUSIAN REVIEW
PO Box 9268 Trenton, NJ 08650
E-mail: belarusianreview@hotmail.com
Tel: (001) 609 424 3126

Europe : BELARUSIAN REVIEW
Malesicka ul. 553/65
108 00 Praha 10, Czech Republic
E-mail: thepointjournal@gmail.com
Tel: (00 49) 157 842 35 160

BELARUSIAN REVIEW is registered in Europe
with Czech Ministry of Culture
Registration No. MK ČR E 13311

Publication Date: September 2014
Printed by:
in Czech Republic —Tiskárna OFF Studio,
101 00 Praha 10
in the United States —Belarusian Review
PO Box 9268
Trenton, N.J., 08650

Annual subscription rate in 2015
$45 for individuals, $65 for institutions
payable by check or money order in US funds
to: BELARUSIAN REVIEW or BR
P.O. Box 1347, Highland Park, NJ 08904, USA

ON-LINE: http://thepointjournal.com
E-mail: thepointjournal@gmail.com